

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

T.A. WATERS

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—
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With Thanks To:

Max Maven, David Michael Evans
and Milt Kort, who between them dug
out two dozen elusive citations; and
to Jim Steinmeyer, who turned each
of these pages under a careful eye.

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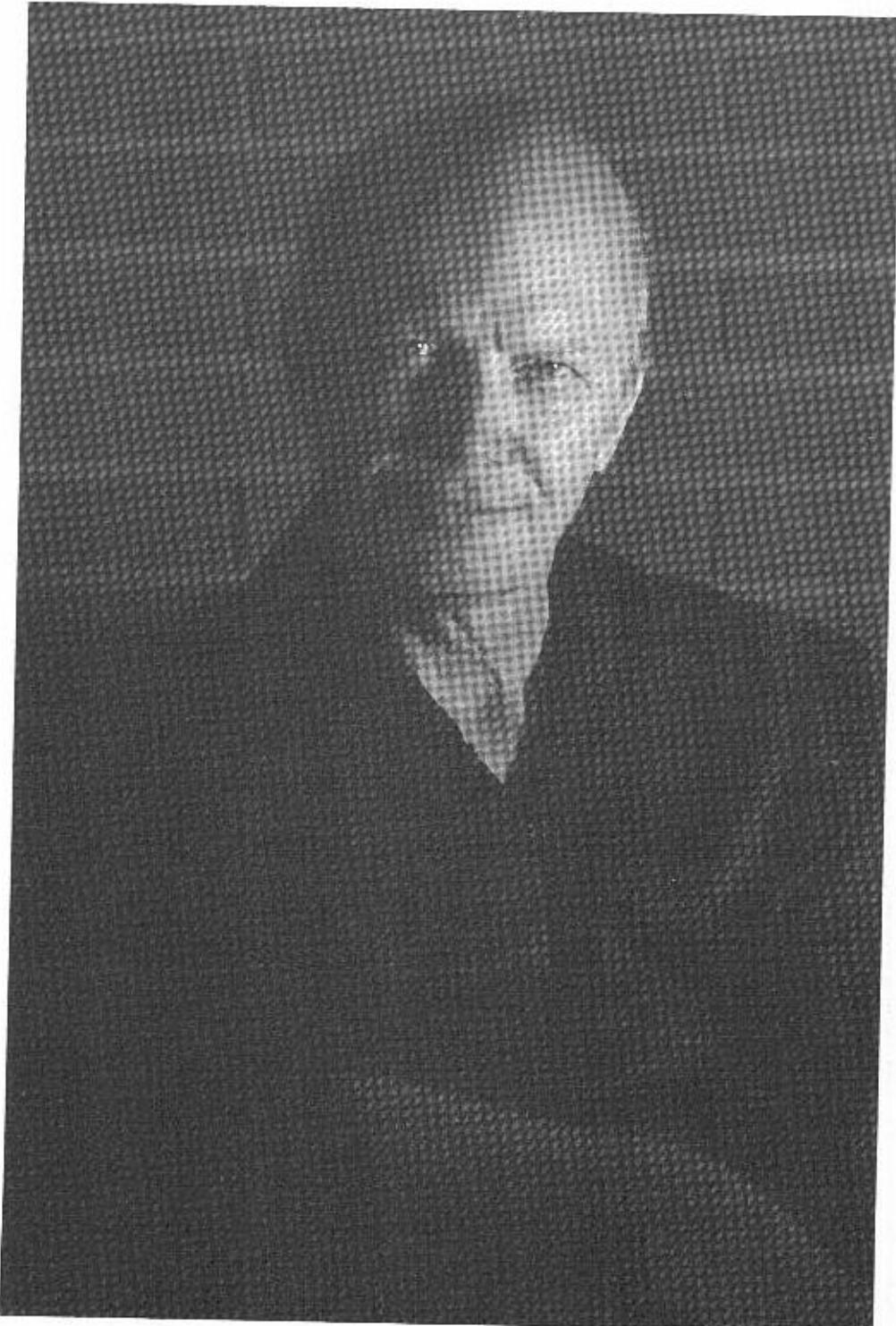
The reader is presumed to have some knowledge of the basic effects and techniques of mentalism; the material in this collection is not intended for the beginner in this field.

LANGUAGE NOTE: I have attempted to keep the following text as free of sexist language as possible. However, given the structure of English, as a matter of convenience in writing I will sometimes employ the masculine personal pronouns. It is just that, a matter of convenience, and no more; certainly the women I have encountered in the field of mentalism are at least as competent as the men, and in many cases much more than that.

CREDIT NOTE: I have tried to be as scrupulous and accurate as possible in assigning credit for source materials. Errors will creep in, however, and I would appreciate any further information or corrections readers may care to offer.

TITLE NOTE: I created the MIND, MYTH & MAGICK title in 1973 for a full-evening show; I have continued to use the title on various publicity pieces. This title was inspired equally by a Joseph Campbell television series called *Mask, Myth And Dream* and an occult book series titled MAN, MYTH AND MAGIC. I later learned that David Berglas had used *Man, Myth And Magic* as the title for a show he performed in Britain in the 1970s. In the 1980s my friend Jeff McBride independently created the *Mask, Myth And Magic* title for his performances; as, identified with this title, he has achieved considerable prominence, I asked him whether he thought my continued use of my title would cause any confusion or bother. Jeff assured me that it was not a problem. Come to think of it, I guess there isn't that much chance of one of us being mistaken for the other....

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T.A. WATERS

Photo by Erika Larsen

for *The Unholy Three*:
RICKY JAY
MAX MAVEN
JOHNNY THOMPSON

INTRODUCTION

EIGHTEEN OF THE twenty-one books in this anthology have their own *Introductions*, so I don't feel it's quite fair to inflict yet another one on you.

A few words, however, of description and explanation:

These books represent nearly all of my published work between 1979 and 1987. As some of you will know, most of it was originally published as saddle-stapled or plastic-bound softcover works of fairly elementary production value, and with illustrations which—except for Phil Goldstein's in *NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD*—took the most charitable interpretation of that term.

I am therefore pleased to see my work in this more permanent form, courtesy of Stephen Minch's Hermetic Press—and with illustrations by Kelly Lyles.

If you have read some of this material in its earlier incarnation, a careful re-reading is advised; *all* of it has been edited and in many cases expanded to make the descriptions as clear as possible, and also to provide additional material and information.

The books appear here as sections, for the most part in the order in which they were published; you will note, if you read in sequence, the evolution of various effects over the years. In no case do I pretend to have achieved perfection—partly because even I don't have an ego that large, and partly because perfection in any performance art can only be achieved (or even attempted) in performance.

As mentioned in the preceding Credit Note, I have tried to be as scrupulous as possible regarding proper crediting, and have in a number of instances revised credit histories of various effects herein to reflect new information. In doing this I have generally tried to ascertain the original inventor of a principle or other aspect, and have not listed later variations by others unless these effects directly inspired the item under discussion.

I am happy to note that many items herein have inspired other creators to come up with their own versions and variations—but not so happy to note

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that in some cases their source of inspiration was not mentioned. At the beginning of each section its original publication date is indicated, which may prove useful to those wishing to determine the genesis of a particular effect.

What I have tried to do here is simply to provide some blueprints for mystery; it's up to you to build the structure of entertainment.

I hope you like what follows.

T.A. Waters
January 1993

NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

[1979]

IN THE FOLLOWING pages you will find effects and routines for many different kinds of situations, from close-up to platform, from mystical to parapsychological.

There is one thing, however, that you will *not* find; I have carefully avoided giving any more than the most general indications as to presentation.

This is not through inability or cussedness, but as a result of my strong belief that the one thing that must be unique to a performer is his or her presentation; it's the only thing you have to separate yourself from the rest of the crowd, to become a unique entity.

In saying this I am, I realize, going against the popular view of things, which is that methods and procedures don't matter and presentation is everything.

Well—in the first place, there are a lot of methods and procedures that could stand improving; as Annemann said over fifty years ago, "*Audiences are far from being as dumb as some performers seem to think.*"

In the second place, if a number of performers get their presentation from a book or magazine, they all end up sounding the same. Worse, as soon as a spectator recognizes the patter line as something heard before, the performer is immediately demoted from the status of a special and unique individual to "...one of those people who do that stuff." In magic this would be bad enough but in mentalism it is absolutely fatal; it has to occur but once in an act to make it impossible to create any kind of dramatic reality.

Within magic there was, recently, a prime example of this kind of thing; the Anderson Newspaper Tear popularized by Doug Henning. So damned many performers lost their audiences (or at least amused them—unintentionally) by going into the same "*illusion and reality*" patter that the audience had heard before—it was enough to make some of us break out in a rash. It took a Jack Goldfinger to bring a fresh approach to this trick and turn it into an absolute show-stopper.

But suppose you aren't a Jack Goldfinger—or, to take an example from within mentalism, a Max Maven? Maybe you just don't have the particular creative turn of mind it takes to put the drapery of illusion on the framework of artifice and gimmickry; what then?

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

You have two avenues open to you:

The first is to look through the older books and magazines. Eventually you'll discover an approach that no one else is using now, something that perhaps hasn't been seen in forty years and would play as brand new. Take it, adapt it, make it your own.

The second way is that used by most professional performers in other fields of show business, i.e., if you can't come up with your own material you find someone who can create it for you—*and you pay him or her to do it.*

Mystery, you see, is supposed to be rare and special; that's part of what makes it mysterious. For you to be special as a mystery performer you must be—or appear to be—unique. You must do your best to make them think they have never seen anything like you before, and accomplishing that is worth whatever effort it takes.

You won't always succeed, of course; nobody can. If you keep trying, though, you'll move closer to that enchanted boundary—and you'll feel better about your work both as artist and professional performer.

And if you *don't* try, you're wasting your audience's time—and your own.

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BOX OFFICE

In this prediction effect the spectator does all the work; in fact (while I don't recommend it), the mentalist could be out of the room the entire time!

EFFECT

After a brief introduction in which you discuss the mystical powers of various amulets, you call the audience's attention to a small chest which sits on the table before you. The lid is lifted back to reveal a tray on which are several amulets of various designs and colors.



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A spectator is asked to assist (in this specific presentation a lady would be preferable) and chooses one of the amulets by removing it from the tray.

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"There is something else for you," you say; you lift the tray from the chest and ask the lady to remove what she finds resting on the floor of the chest proper.

What she finds is a folded slip of paper; on being opened it proves to be a prophecy which you have her read aloud: *"In your future there lies a journey; you have, therefore, taken the amulet which protects travelers—the green scarab."*

METHOD

For this you will need a small ornate chest or jewel box having a tray which lifts out; this tray should be roomy enough for several amulets and can be of the kind separated into compartments. The only other requirement is that the floor of the tray be as thin as possible and not made of metal.

The amulets can be made in a number of ways; the easiest, perhaps, is to shape them out of plastic wood. They should be distinctly different in appearance—an occult sourcebook can be helpful here—and of different colors.

Embedded in each amulet is a strong magnet. This magnet should be so positioned in the amulet that it will be close to the floor of the tray when the amulet is placed there.

A prediction is written along the lines suggested above for each of the amulets; since you are creating the amulets you have every right to decide what they mean.

The folded slips of paper are secured with paper clips.

Each amulet is placed in the tray and the appropriate slip placed under the tray, where its paper clip is held by the attraction of the magnet in the amulet. The tray is placed in the chest and all is ready.

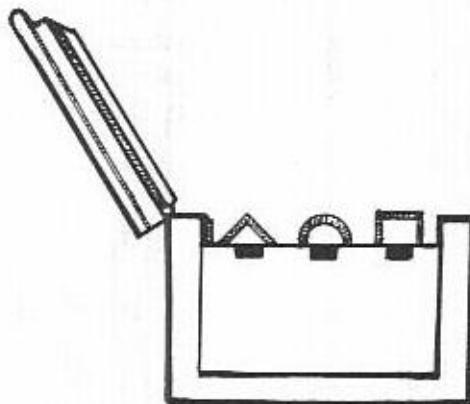
Your performance follows along the lines suggested under *Effect*; as should now be clear, when the spectator removes the amulet the appropriate prediction is released from beneath the tray and falls to the floor of the chest.

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Care should, of course, be taken that the spectator does not glimpse the underside of the tray. Also: make sure the spectator decides on an amulet *first* and *then* removes it from the tray, since—while you could probably cover it with suitable patter—it is better to avoid the problem of two prophecies being found in the chest.

NOTES

The objects in the upper tray can be of just about any kind, as long as they can be fitted with the magnets. Chess pieces, wooden blocks, figurines—the



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possibilities are as limitless as your imagination. (Chess pieces may not, in fact, be a good idea—some travel chess sets use magnetic pieces, and a spectator may be aware of that; use your own judgment.)

Do not choose a spectator who is wearing metallic bracelets or other jewelry; a swinging chain, for example, might be attracted to the magnet in the amulet. Also, before the spectator makes her selection, indicate a spot on the table in front of the chest where she is to place it, and so instruct her. This way, she will take the amulet from the chest and place it directly down, and the chances of accidental discovery of the magnet are materially reduced.

It might be that you wish to do a further effect using the objects in the tray; if this is the case a slight additional preparation is made.

Cut a piece of very thin card or construction paper to a size matching the interior surface of the tray. Be certain that it will clear the ledges which support the tray and will therefore drop cleanly to the bottom of the chest. The upper surface of this flap should match that of the interior bottom of the chest.

When the tray is prepared for performance this flap is first placed up against the bottom of the tray and the predictions are put in position underneath it. The attraction of the magnets to the paper-clipped predictions will hold the paper flap in place.

The effect is performed as usual; removal of just one of the amulets, and the release of its prediction, will not affect the flap. When the rest of the amulets are removed for whatever subsequent effect you have planned, the prediction billets will drop to the floor of the chest and the paper flap, with nothing to hold it, will drop to cover them.

At the conclusion of the effect the tray can be removed to gather up the amulets; if any curious spectator should glance into the chest it will appear empty.

This additional preparation suggests a presentation in which a prediction is made and dropped into the chest proper and the drawer (with the flap held *under* the billets beneath the tray) *then* set in place; the flap drops, covering the original prediction, and the effect proceeds as usual.

Another approach, for the mechanically minded, would have a spring-loaded flap hinged at one side of the bottom of the tray; a fillet of wood in the bottom of the box would hold this flap open until the drawer was lifted. When the edge of the flap cleared the wood strip, it would swing up into position and conceal the remaining billets.

I don't feel that this necessarily adds anything to the presentation as given; in certain circumstances, however, it might find an application.

Many import stores sell small decorative chests with an upper tray and a lower drawer. Using one of these, the spectator is invited to open the drawer after making her selection. These chests will usually require some slight alteration (removing an interior separation between the tray and drawer), but since this doesn't have to be a neat job—as it is never seen—it's a fairly simple bit of carpentry.

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CREDITS

The concept of having the spectator's action in removing an object from a display trigger the operation of some mechanism or process is not a new one; it has been used most notably in Ed Mellon's Quantimental stand. Under the title *WhosGotWot* Eric Lewis described some similar items of apparatus in his CROWNING MIRACLES¹.

To the best of my knowledge, however, using the spectator's action in this way to complete the effect itself is an original concept.

¹Page 202.

TRYPTRYCH

The three-object divination has exerted a peculiar fascination on mentalists, and many have been the methods employed to bring about the effect, ranging from the old *Apple, Orange And Banana* mathematical feat to electronic devices such as the chess-piece divination marketed by Harry Stanley some years ago.

The routine to be described is interesting in that it uses nothing, from the audience's point of view, but the three objects themselves.

EFFECT

For purposes of description we will imagine you to be seated at a dinner table. You have arranged three objects in the shape of a triangle: a salt shaker, a pepper shaker and a (capped!) sauce bottle. Pattering briefly about the mystical properties of the triangle, you turn your back and instruct the spectator seated across from you to remove two of the objects, placing them in left and right jacket pockets. The third object is held by the spectator under the table.

When this has been done you turn around; after a moment of concentration while you consult a small crystal or stare into your water-glass, you name the locations of all three objects. There is no hedging or pumping of any kind.

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METHOD

This very straightforward effect is achieved by means of a rather peculiar gimmick and a bit of advance preparation.

The gimmick can be constructed for a total investment of around fifty cents and about fifteen minutes' work; once you understand the principle involved you can make it with whatever suitable materials you have on hand.

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The gimmick consists of a triangular piece of plastic, about the size and shape of a guitar pick (mine, in fact, *was* a guitar pick); holes have been punched or drilled at each corner and a three-inch length of elastic thread tied to each hole. The other end of each piece of elastic ends in a 'tab' made by folding a piece of cloth tape over on itself with a few turns of the elastic trapped between the sticky surfaces.

Having made the gimmick, find three reasonably heavy objects and place them on a table in a triangular arrangement; put one of the tabs of the gimmick under each object.

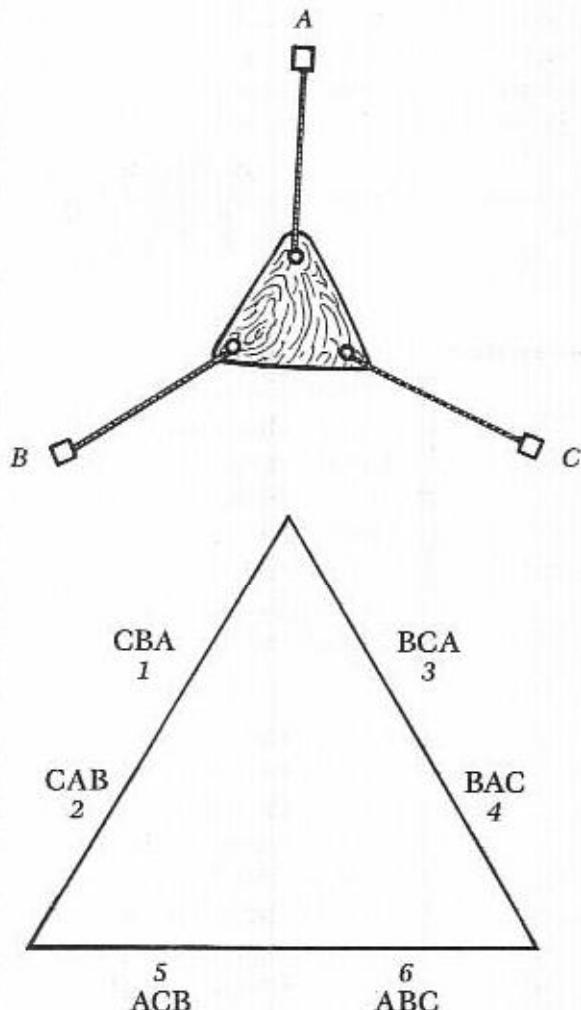
If the three objects are placed far enough apart to put tension on the elastic thread, you will note that removal of two of the objects will cause the plastic triangle to move from its central position to one of six ending positions—and that final position *tells you the order* in which the objects were removed!

There is no need to memorize the diagram shown on the right, since common sense and logic will indicate the sequence:

the plastic triangle will always end in a position closest to the *last* object removed, on a line (imaginary) between it and the *next-to-last* object removed.

All that is required in the way of preparation is to slip the gimmick under the tablecloth and place the objects on the tabs so that they will be held in position through the cloth by the weight of the objects. It is important that there is enough tension on the elastic so that removal of the objects will move the gimmick properly. A small bit of experimentation and adjustment of the lengths of elastic thread will indicate the proper positioning.

In performance, as with other effects of this type, you give the spectator specific directions once you have turned your back, i.e.: *'Decide on any one of the three objects; take it and put it in your left jacket pocket. [pause] Take either of*



NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

the remaining objects and put it in your right jacket pocket. [pause] Take away the last object and hold it under the table so that I can't possibly see it. After each sentence you wait for the spectator to indicate that he has completed your instruction; alternatively, you can ask him directly, 'Have you done so?'*

The business with the small crystal is not dressing; it has a purpose.

You turn back to face the spectator after he has indicated that the last object is out of sight. Taking glass or crystal, you hold it between your hands so that it is at the approximate position previously held by Object A (the point of the triangle furthest away from you). The edges of both hands rest on the table; if you do not feel the plastic under either hand, let your thumbs brush the area between B and C.

Once you have located the gimmick you know which object is where and can devote your energies to the histrionics befitting this little miracle.

NOTES

One useful addition to the gimmick as described is a thread attached between B and C on the plastic triangle; this goes back and over the edge of the table and ends in a small bead. This simply makes it easier to retrieve the gimmick—not a concern in a formal close-up show but useful in supposedly 'impromptu' situations.

In these impromptu situations, you are of course confined to those circumstances where you will have a few seconds to yourself at the table. Don't try to do it where you will have to rush the setting-up procedure; if one of the tabs, badly placed, should slip out of position, you'll have to be very psychic—or very lucky!

While it might be possible to work out a satisfactory version using only two tabs, combined with a specific kind of instruction, it really isn't necessary; properly set the gimmick will work every time.

CREDITS

Tryptych is in the same genre as Quantimental, previously mentioned, and the ball divination in Cook and Buckley's GEMS OF MENTAL MAGIC². Unlike those, however, *Tryptych* uses nothing other than the objects themselves, and the gimmick—which to the best of my knowledge is original in principle and design.

Interestingly, this effect was created in answer to a challenge by a friend, who described to me an effect which was at one time commercially marketed in Germany. After I had devised this method I learned that the German effect used a totally different and far more elaborate device to accomplish the same result. Of such incidents is the history of magical invention made....

Ah, but what about those times when you'd like to do the divination just described and you are confronted with a table of bare wood?

In that case...

²Page 66.

ON THE BUTTON

EFFECT

From a small case you remove three suitably mystical-looking objects and place them on the table.

As before, you turn your back and have a spectator place the objects in his pockets.

You then proceed to reveal the location of each of the three objects. This can be done, as a matter of fact, without *ever turning around!*

METHOD

It might be said that the working here combines principles of the two previously described effects.

Each of the objects you place on the table has a magnet embedded in it; three of the objects prepared for *Box Office* can be employed.

There is also a secret gimmick of simple construction. It consists of a small screw or push-pin with an eye; to this eye are tied three lengths of fishline. At the other end of each line is attached a small button magnet of the kind to be found in hardware stores.

These magnets must be marked so they can be identified by touch. This can be done in a number of ways: by strips around them, by notches filed into the edge, by small scraps of metal or pieces of shot being glued to them with epoxy.

Each performer will decide on the system which works best in his or her individual situation. The only essential is that each magnet can be specifically identified by touch with reasonable speed.

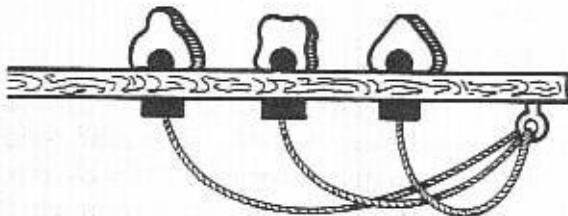
Once the gimmick is ready, the only preparation for the effect is to jam the point of the screw or pin into the underside of the table just a bit in from the edge nearest you.

NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

In performance the three objects are removed from their case and placed on the table.

After they have been set out, you touch each in turn as you explain its meaning or mystical properties; at the same time your other hand, under the table,

brings the appropriate magnet up beneath it. The hand above the table is there to prevent any possible movement as the magnet is positioned.

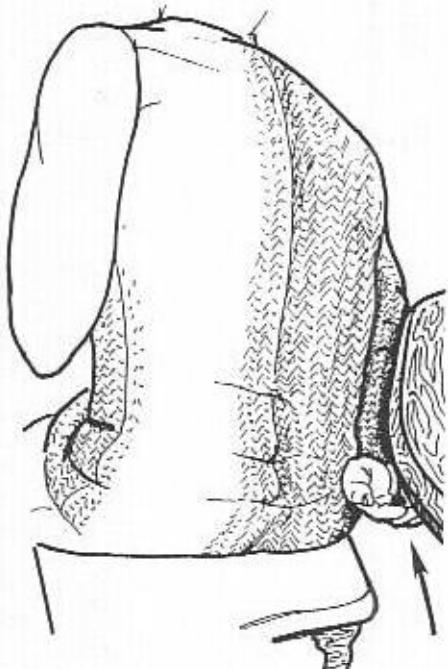


away. Your hand nearest the table, however, is left in a position directly below the screw-eye gimmick.

As the spectator removes each object the magnet, now released, will swing down into your waiting hand; by touch you will know immediately which object has been taken and can reveal this information in whatever way you please.

NOTES

There is no theoretical reason why the effect should be limited to three objects. In actual practice, however, additional objects do not seem to produce any greater effect.



After sticking the gimmick in the underside of the table you should let the magnets hang for a few moments to 'unravel' if they have become tangled. Otherwise, should one line be looped over another, when one magnet is released it might accidentally detach the other.

As each magnet is caught it should (once identified) be held back in the hand so that the next magnet will not click against it on arrival.

Needless to say, both *Tryptych* and *On The Button* can also employ the presentation where three different spectators are asked to each take an object.

While it is possible to do this with only two magnet-object setups—you know the third is chosen if no magnet falls—I

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

think it is better to have all three set up as described, to confirm to yourself that the effect is proceeding as planned.

One final note: you must, of course, test the setup on tables of various thicknesses and composition so that you are aware of the limits of the magnetic attraction. (Extremely powerful small magnets are available from many scientific and electronic supply houses.)

CREDITS

As indicated in the two previous effects. There have also been, from time to time, various devices using magnets as telltales; all that I have seen used stands, easels or other such visible props, with a single exception: Steve Skomp, in his book *SKOMPLIMENTARY MENTALISM*³, describes a table that is gimmicked to perform as a Quantimental stand. None of these were of a design similar to that just described.

The reading of hidden information is perhaps the cornerstone of classical mentalism; indeed, there are those who claim that the answering of questions, along with psychometry, is mentalism, and that all else is but 'mental magic'.

While I don't subscribe to that extreme view I will concede that few effects in the entire realm of mentalism can compete with the direct revelation of a spectator's *personal* thought.

With that in mind I have devised the following four procedures for producing this most popular of effects.

FLIPSIGHT I

This and *Flipsight II* are for the close-up situation; both employ Himber 'Flipover' Wallets. First we will describe the routine using the full-size wallet.

EFFECT

Opening your wallet you extract a business card from the large pocket. You draw a line along the card, dividing it horizontally, and ask the spectator to sign her name above the line.

Turning your back, you instruct the spectator to think of a question, then to jot down on the lower half of the card a word or phrase that will symbolize the thought. The spectator is further instructed to turn the card writing side down and then indicate to you that this has been done so that you may turn around again.

Without glancing at the card you place it in the other pocket of the wallet. As you begin your reading, you take another card from the wallet and scribble some impressions on it, eventually giving it to the spectator to hold.

When the question card is removed from the wallet and compared with your impressions it is seen that you have written a direct answer to the question.

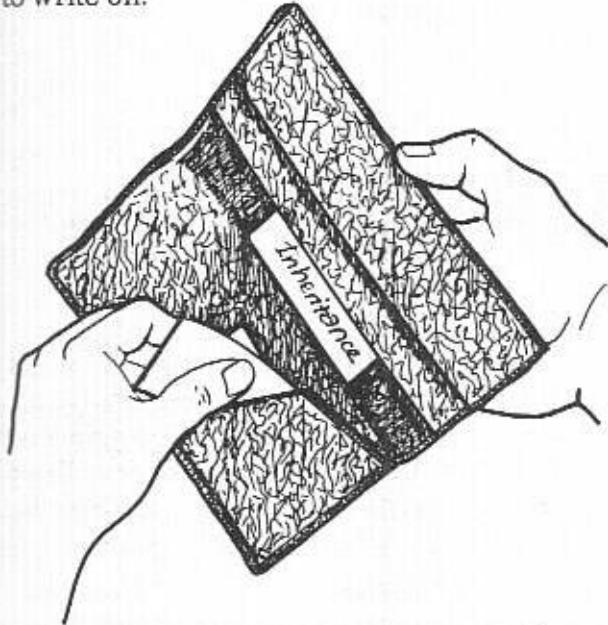
METHOD

The diagonal-cut pocket on each side of the wallet has a few business cards in it; this is the extent of the preparation.

During the performance, when you take the spectator's question card, make sure that you are holding it by the edge closest to the spectator's signature, so that when it is placed into the long pocket (which is actually a tunnel through to the other side of the wallet) the area of the card with the written question will go in first.

NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

The card is placed in the wallet as indicated and the wallet is closed, being flipped over in the process. As you talk you realize you too need something to write on.



You open the wallet (on the other side, though the spectator doesn't know that).

At this point the wallet is tilted up so that the spectator cannot see into it.

As you remove a card from the diagonal or half-cut pocket you will see the lower half of the spectator's card, with the word or phrase clearly visible, projecting from the other pocket. A brief glance is all that is necessary.

Proceed as described under *Effect*.

Himber-style wallets vary in design, but most have the pocket-through feature. A bit of experimentation with your model of wallet will indicate the best handling.

FLIPSIGHT II

Here we use the I.D. Case model of the Himber Flipover Wallet for a somewhat similar procedure. This model has a clear plastic window on one side and a small pocket on the other. The window section is the center of the three panels and something must be placed in it in the various routines to prevent the concealed pocket from being visible through the window.

EFFECT

As before, the spectator writes on the back of a business card a word symbolizing a question; in this version, however, there is no signing of the card and no limitation as to where the spectator may write.

This done, you slip the card (writing side down, of course) under the clear window, which has a solid white backing. The wallet is then closed.

In the course of things you remove a card and scribble your impressions; the spectator's card is removed from the wallet and your answer is seen to be correct.

METHOD

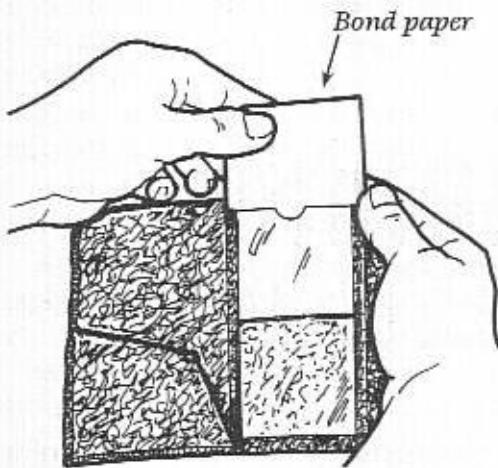
The setup for this involves a slight addition to your flipover I.D. Case which should take you about one minute to prepare.

All that is done is to cut a piece of good quality bond paper to a size that will completely fill the clear window from top to bottom. Once this is slipped into place between the pieces of clear plastic and a few cards have been placed in each of the pockets you are all set.

The details of performance are handled as indicated in *Effect*. When you open the I.D. Case on the other side you will be able to read the spectator's writing quite easily through the single bond paper. (It is, of course, understood that the card has been

NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

placed in the I.D. Case *above* the paper, so that from the spectator's point of view the writing is resting against a solid and inaccessible backing.)



lifting the window away from the concealed pocket slightly. When this is done the 'white shadow' disappears.

A PenTel™, Flair™ or other broad-tipped marking pen is preferable to a pencil or ball-point pen, as the thicker line is easier to read through the bond paper.

NOTES

You may have to play around a bit with the various qualities of bond paper to get one of the proper translucency.

It may happen that the paper is translucent enough to show the whiter area in the lower part of the case where the business cards are resting. Two points will help here: first—always have the cards in the pocket printed side in; second—with some models of I.D. Case it is possible to squeeze the sides a bit,

CREDITS

I do not intend to be drawn into a discussion of who the actual inventor of the flipover wallet may have been; certainly there is little doubt that Richard Himber was the first to produce it in a quality design and popularize its use.

I have used both peek-methods described for over twenty years, and devised them both. The *first* described method occurred to me about thirty minutes after I acquired a wallet, and seemed a very obvious application. I should note that a similar idea was described by Chip Cotton in *Magick*⁴; I am told that in some models of the wallet this idea was included with the instructions; and Bob Mason published a manuscript discussing a specially-modified Himber Wallet used in this way.⁵



We now proceed to two further methods of message-reading; these, however, are intended for stage use.

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⁴No. 161; Sept. 3, 1976; page 803.

⁵BOB MASON'S OWN PERSONAL IDEAS AND ROUTINES FOR THE HIMBER WALLET... AS MARKETED BY LEE NOBLE.

BURNING QUESTIONS

In his *IT MUST BE MINDREADING* (certainly one of the half-dozen best books on mentalism ever written), George Anderson devised a sealed-envelope routine called *Getting The Impression*⁶; I was very impressed with the basic idea and setting, but could never get the handling of his method down to my satisfaction.

After a bit of thought I came up with the following two procedures:

EFFECT

Members of the audience write questions on cards and seal them in envelopes which are then collected by someone from the audience and brought to you.

A brass bowl with some sort of combustible material is set alight. Gazing entranced into the flame, you take one of the questions and place it behind your back. After a bit of concentration you answer the question. Without further ado it is brought forward and tossed into the flames.

You continue in this way, answering the questions and then tossing them into the firebowl without opening them, for as long as required.

METHOD

Well, yes, it's a one-ahead—but with a difference, as you apparently never open the envelopes for verification.

Also, as you will see, it need not necessarily be done as a one-ahead routine...!

⁶Page 15.

NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

Nothing is required except what has been described: cards, envelopes (the cheapest opaque ones you can find, both for the obvious reason—you burn up a bunch of them—and for another purpose which will become obvious presently) and the brass bowl, along with matches and something in the bowl to get the fire going.

If you are using the one-ahead routine, one item has been forced and you have marked the envelope containing that information so you can avoid it.

Once the envelopes have been collected and the fire started in the bowl, you take any envelope but the marked one and put it behind your back.

As you give the first answer, using the force information, you simply *rip away a small strip at one end of the envelope, take the card out and place it behind the envelope*. The torn strip you tuck into the envelope.

When you've finished the answer you bring the envelope forward, holding it by the torn end and thus concealing it—and glimpse the question as you drop everything into the bowl. Make sure the card and envelope are fairly into the bowl before releasing them, since the card may separate from the envelope as you let go.

Needless to say, as you proceed through the routine you are apparently answering the question you hold behind your back; in actuality you are giving out the information just glimpsed.

As mentioned earlier, the routine can be done *without* the one-ahead procedure or necessity for a force item.

To do this you simply begin each question with a stock character reading; if you have been foresighted enough to mark the envelopes, you know *who* you are reading for, which helps. As you complete the character analysis you bring the envelope forward and throw it into the flames, glimpsing the question as you do so.

Since you have apparently begun to answer the question *before* you bring the envelope forward the spectator attaches no importance to it—and the immediate destruction of the envelope and question disarms any possible suspicion.

The reason for using a cheap envelope will now be clear; you want one that you can rip open noiselessly.

Some people may be doubtful about the procedure described, thinking it too simple to fool anyone. To that the only answer must be that it *has* fooled many, many people—including a few magicians here and there.

◆

The one drawback to this routine is that it can only be done with the audience in front of you; in a search for something where the angles are less critical I came up with the following...

BURNING QUESTIONS II

EFFECT

As before, the spectators write questions and seal them in envelopes which are collected and brought to you.

Without any business behind the back you take them and drop each one singly into the flame-filled bowl, then proceed to answer the question. There is no one-ahead employed; in fact, the envelopes may be numbered to establish that you are actually answering the question just dropped into the bowl of fire.

METHOD

As with the previous method, you're going to have to try this before you'll believe it works...

...what happens is actually quite simple; you really do drop the envelope into the firebowl and it really is burned.

But the question card isn't.

To put it bluntly, what you have done is to fireproof the card so it *won't* burn.

There are various methods of doing this; You can get a commercial spray preparation (if you have trouble locating such a product your local fire department should be able to help you). Various homemade preparations can also be used, e.g., a strong solution of boric acid—available at any drugstore—sponged onto both sides of the cards.

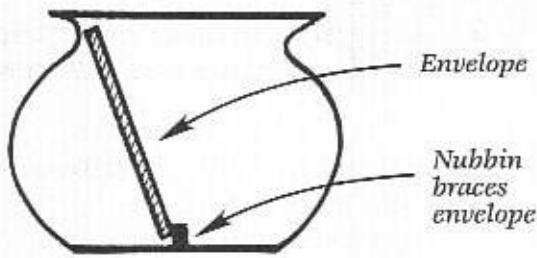
Bear in mind that all you need is a fire-retardant effect: you don't really have to cut the cards out of asbestos.

I have also tried preparations to the envelope itself to make it burn a bit quicker, but this is really not necessary if the right kind of cheap, pulpy envelope is found.

NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

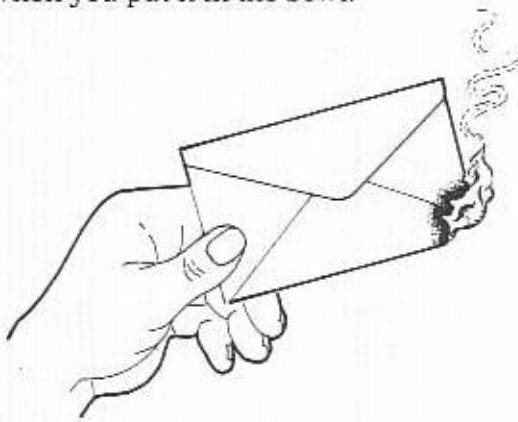
The procedure during performance is as set out in *Effect*; it is necessary to so instruct the spectators that the cards will be put in the envelopes writing side down (next to the address side), presumably to hide the writing from your accidental glance but actually to permit you to place the envelope in the bowl so the writing is facing you.

In the bottom of the bowl you have placed rolled-up scraps of paper or something similar to start the fire.



As indicated, the size of the bowl dictates the size of the envelope (or vice versa). With some bowls you will find it helpful to solder a small 'nubbin' to the center bottom of the bowl so that an envelope dropped in will rest at the proper angle.

The best way to insure that the envelope is consumed is to first hold it in a vertical fashion so that the envelope is lit along what will be the bottom edge when you put it in the bowl.



If this is done the flames follow their natural tendency to burn upward, peeling the envelope away from the card as they do so...

NOTES

This latter routine is just as suitable for a one-on-one reading situation as for stage.

Regarding the stage routine, a few points:

The bowl should be placed on a wooden block with some sort of insulating pad beneath it; it will become *very* hot if more than a few questions are answered. For this same reason you should be careful not to touch the rim or sides of the bowl as you place the questions within.

A brass rod should be handy; apparently you use this to stir up the ashes—actually, when necessary, to knock the remains of the envelope away from the question card. Once the card has been read the rod can also be used to poke it down into the bottom of the bowl so that the subsequent question will have 'air space' around it to facilitate the burning of the envelope. (Depending on what kind of envelopes you get these two steps may not be necessary; but it's nice to be prepared for any eventuality.)

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Do *not* do this routine before checking for the presence of oversensitive sprinkler systems or smoke detectors—unless in addition to being psychic you also claim to be a rainmaker!

CREDITS

I must stress that the *mise en scène* and general procedure for *Burning Questions I* are from Anderson's IT MUST BE MINDREADING; so too is the excellent angle of using a "word or phrase to symbolize the question." In that routine all I have really done is eliminate the gimmick used.

In spite of the amazing number of message-reading methods in the literature, to the best of my knowledge the fireproofing procedure used in *Burning Questions II* is original with me.

CLIPPOLINE

The effect of clipping away at a column and predicting where the spectator will stop has become very popular in recent years. Indeed, at least one complete book has been written on the subject.

The version to follow is a straightforward routine I think you'll like...and you'll love the method!

EFFECT

A prediction is shown and left with a spectator. You exhibit a long column of newspaper and fold it exactly in half.

Removing a pair of scissors from your pocket you proceed to snip off strips from the paired ends until a spectator calls stop. Putting the scissors aside, you advance to the spectator and unfold the column of paper, asking that the first and last lines be read.

When the prediction is read by the spectator holding it, it is seen that you have predicted the lines exactly.

METHOD

The title of this effect gives away the working; what you are actually doing is a very old cut-and-restored paper effect called Clippo.

The column of paper is about twelve to fifteen inches long and must be solid type from end to end; it should have on its back something like an illustration or ad with a great deal of white space, although this is not absolutely necessary; it is, however, essential that the back does not have any visual cue to its orientation, since during the routine you will be holding it upside-down and—even though it is folded and thus the position is a bit confusing—you don't want an analytical spectator to start thinking about this.

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The central eight inches on the type side are given a coating of rubber cement, which is then dusted with talcum powder; with care this can be done in such a way that the preparation is not at all evident. (If you have any doubts about this, buy one of the inexpensive marketed versions of Clippo and examine the papers.)

Make a note of the top and bottom lines of the column and write them down as your prediction. You will also need a pair of small, sharp scissors; the blades should be long enough to cut across the column in one straight snip.

In performance, after handing out the prediction you pick up the column of newsprint and after a moment fold it exactly in half, print side inward; make a very sharp crease when you do this.

As with your other hand you reach for the scissors in your pocket, the hand holding the newsprint drops to your side, and with your fingers you flip the folded column *end for end*. The result, of course, is that when you bring your hand up again and poise the scissors, the spectators think you are about to start cutting bits off the *ends*. In actuality you are going to be cutting sections out of the *center* of the column.

Proceed as described in *Effect*; that is to say, explain what you are about to do and then start cutting off small strips, no more than a few lines thick, from the folded section of paper projecting from your hand. Continue until requested to stop by the nominated spectator.

As you place the scissors in your pocket or turn to set them on the table, again you flip the column end for end.

Advancing to the spectator who asked you to stop cutting, you let the column fall open. Because of the rubber-cement preparation, the two pieces will cling together as one, and if the line of joining is at all visible it will be taken to be the fold you made at the beginning.

(Do bear in mind that (a) the spectator's attention is immediately drawn to the top and bottom of the paper, (b) he has no reason to suspect or examine the center and (c) if the paper has been properly prepared he can look at it in most cases for quite a while without seeing anything peculiar.)

The spectator is asked to read the first and last full lines of print; this done, you ask the other spectator to read your prediction as you crumple up the newsprint and pocket it.

NOTES

If you are really concerned about the center of the column appearing just so, you can take the trouble to fold it so the lines of type facing each other are always in exact alignment; then, in the cutting process, always cut exactly between lines of print. This is *not necessary*; if you're worried about it simply hold the column by the center after you've opened it, concealing the join.

It is important that the cuts be made straight across, at an exact right angle to the length of the column; otherwise, when you open it the paper will hang at an angle from the join.

NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

CREDITS

The cut-and-restored paper strip effect, marketed as Clippo by Will De Sieve, is a version of the Magic Shears effect invented by J.J. Kolar; it is described in J. G. Thompson's *MY BEST*⁷. Albert Spackman invented the very popular approach to the newspaper column prediction effect in which the column is secretly inverted⁸; however, the application differed from *Clippoline* in both technique and method.

⁷Page 208.

⁸*The Gen*, Vol. 20, No. 6; page 146.

UNKNOWN POWER

In the literature of mentalism there are several predictions using tape recorders; one of my own, which used a concealed recorder, appeared over three decades ago in *Genii*⁹.

Most of these routines involved fairly complex alterations to the tape recorder, beyond the scope of many performers to make. In that light I offer the following.

EFFECT

This is essentially a headline prediction routine; you deliver a tape cassette to the radio announcer, or whomever, with instructions to bring it to the performance on the night in question. The cassette has, of course, been initialed, signed, sealed in a display box to prevent tampering (or it being played beforehand!) and is set on display until the night of the performance.

The celebrity/dignitary brings it onstage and places it in your tape recorder. Newspapers are exhibited and the headlines repeated for the benefit of those too far back to read them. You then play the tape. Your predictions are correct in every detail.

METHOD

As the title indicates, you accomplish this miracle through the use of an unknown power; that power is...battery power...

...your first requirement is a particular type of cassette recorder. It must, first of all, be of the type which runs either on batteries or by extension cord. Secondly, it must have a pair

⁹Vol. 23, No. 11; July 1959; page 394.

NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD

of input jacks (usually used to record from a radio or record player). It should not be too difficult to find a tape recorder which meets these specifications.

You will also need another tape recorder; this can be of any size or design as long as it has *output* jacks.

The alterations made are very simple, and can be completed in well under an hour. You simply detach the two wires going from where the extension cord is normally plugged in, and connect them (by soldering, or simply twisting together and taping them) to the two wires connected to the input jacks.

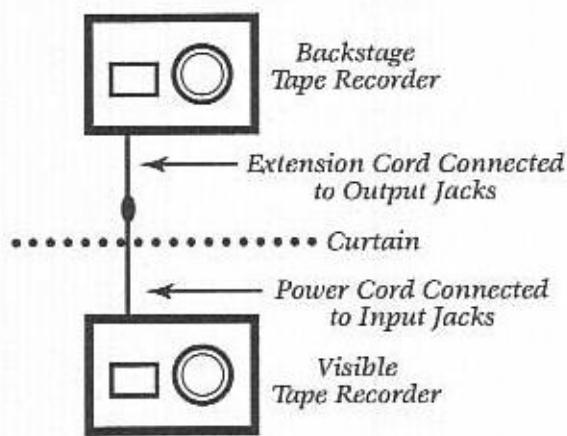
In some models there may be a mechanical interlock that automatically cuts off the battery circuit when the extension cord is put into its tape-recorder socket; if yours is of this type it is not difficult to locate the interlock and remove it. Once you have done this the preparation is complete.

IMPORTANT: ONCE YOU HAVE DONE THIS DO NOT PLUG THE POWER CORD INTO A LIVE OUTLET; IF YOU DO YOU WILL RUIN THE TAPE RECORDER AND PROBABLY BLOW A FUSE AT THE VERY LEAST.

The only other preparation is to take a regular electrical extension cord and cut off the plug; two jacks that will fit into the output sockets of the second recorder are attached to the wires. (Note: Try to find a very light-gauge cord for this; heavy-duty cords sometimes offer too much resistance for the signal.)

The cassette delivered to the celebrity with all due pomp and ceremony is a blank.

The setup on stage consists of the rewired tape recorder with its power cord plugged into the extension cord which goes offstage, where its two jacks are plugged into the other recorder. In this recorder is a cassette on which, at some point prior to performance, you have recorded your predictions.



During performance the celebrity is brought on stage and testifies to the fact that the cassette has not been out of his control, etc. He then places it in the tape recorder.

This done, you hand him one of the newspapers with a headline on it and ask him to show it to the audience. This is done for three reasons: to show the headline, to keep his hands full so that he is not in a position to turn on the tape recorder, and to bring him downstage and away from the immediate vicinity of the tape recorder.

You do this last so that he does not see that instead of simply pushing the *On* button, you push it to *On-Play-Record*.

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As a result, the sound from the offstage tape recorder not only plays out through the speaker of the onstage recorder but also is recorded on the blank cassette.

It is preferable to set the volume high enough on the visible recorder so that it can be heard directly through its speaker; having to hold a microphone up to it would becloud the effect and be a very bad idea.

After the cassette has 'played' you give it to the celebrity as a souvenir and thank him for his assistance.

NOTES

If you have someone assisting offstage, they can turn on the recorder there. If not, simply have a certain amount of 'blank space' on the recorded prediction before you begin speaking, timing this in accordance with your particular presentation. Start the hidden recorder before you go onstage; you should have either a digital watch (with countdown stopwatch capabilities) or a visible digital wall clock so that you can start the onstage recorder just before the time your prediction comes up on the offstage tape. In case of any doubt it is better to be fifteen seconds early than fifteen seconds late!

CREDITS

There have been many tape recorder predictions in the literature of mentalism, such as Corinda's in his THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM¹⁰ and Bob Tripp's in the first volume of Nelson's SENSATIONAL MENTALISM¹¹ series. The particular methodology of *Unknown Power* is, to the best of my knowledge, my own.

¹⁰Page 215.

¹¹Page 68.

SYNCHROINCIDENCE

There has been a running dispute for many years whether it is appropriate for a mentalist to use playing cards. Without wishing to make a case for them (pun intended), I will only point out that both Dunninger and Annemann worked with cards; card effects constituted the largest part of Chan Canasta's act; and those who have seen the all-card mental routine of Max Maven will need no further proof of how effective card work of this type can be in the proper hands.

EFFECT

Two decks are used, one red-backed and the other blue-backed.

You give, say, the blue-backed deck to a spectator to look over and shuffle; while the spectator is thus engaged you remove the red-backed deck from its case and also shuffle. Both these shuffles are genuine.

The blue-backed deck is taken from the spectator and spread face *down* on the table; the red-backed deck is spread face *up*.

A spectator indicates *any* card in the face-up spread, either by pointing to one or naming one. Another spectator indicates *any one* of the face-down blue-backed cards.

"*A Four of Hearts from the red-backed deck,*" you say, showing this to be the case. "*And from the blue-backed deck...*" You turn around the card in your hands; it, too, is a Four of Hearts.

METHOD

For this you will need a blue-backed deck, in its case; and a deck of red-blue double backers, red side up, in a red-back case. There is no other preparation.

When you are ready to perform, the blue-backed deck is handed to the spectator to remove from the case, look over and shuffle. You do the same with the 'red' deck, overhand shuffling it so that the spectators see a number of red backs.

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After a bit of this ask the spectator if she is satisfied that her deck is thoroughly shuffled; as attention shifts to her for a moment you do a half-pass under the top card—in other words, you secretly turn the deck over beneath that top card so that you have one double-backed red side up above the rest of the deck blue side up. You now hold the double-backed deck in your right hand from above and take the spectator's deck in your left hand in dealing position.

As you turn to the table you notice you left the card case or some other item in the way; you place the double-backed deck into your left hand above the spectator's deck, keeping the two separate with the fingers, and remove the offending object from the table.

Your right hand comes back to your left and removes the double-backed deck, but the left thumb draws off the top (red-side-up double-backed) card onto the genuine blue deck beneath. The right hand now immediately spreads the double-backed deck, blue side up, on the table; the spectators see what is apparently your red-backed deck still in your left hand.

After a brief pause to allow that red back to register, you turn the deck face up and spread it in a parallel row beside the 'blue-backed' deck. In doing this, be careful not to expose the blue back of the double-backer at the bottom of the face-up deck.

Two cards are indicated as described in *Effect*; you push them both out of the spread and pick up the double-backer. "The Four of Hearts [or whatever]," you say, "from a—"

Here you do a very simple sort of Mexican turnover; you slide the double-backed card beneath the face-up Four of Hearts, and apparently lever it over; actually you release the double-backed card and grasp the Four of Hearts, so that the red side of the double-backed card now shows on the table and you are holding the blue-backed Four of Hearts in your hand.¹²

At the beginning of the move you had a face-down blue-backed card in your hand and a card supposedly with a red back face up on the table; apparently you have shown that red back and are still holding the same blue-backed card.

"—from a red deck. From the blue deck—" you focus all attention on the card in your hands, 'forgetting' the face-down card on the table;—"an unknown card which turns out to be...the Four of Hearts!" You slowly turn the card over, displaying it to the audience.

NOTES

It is no great problem to switch in the red-blue double-backed deck if you have been doing some previous two-deck effects; since there is no preparation to the blue-backed deck, it can be in continuous use.

If you have an ordinary red-backed card on top of the double-backed deck to begin with, and retain this card on top during your shuffle so it is the one

¹²For readers unfamiliar with this sleight, descriptions can be found in most basic texts on card magic, e.g., ERDNASE'S EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE, page 123.

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transferred to the other deck, then you need not be cautious about spreading the upper end of the deck. If you're this paranoid, you will probably want to remove the blue card of the same identity against the chance that it might end up near the upper end of the deck after the spectator's shuffle.

CREDITS

The basic idea—and the genesis of the deck switch—come from Robert Parrish's *Synchronism* in the Parrish and Weigle book *DO THAT AGAIN*¹³. A similar effect, *Contrasting Prediction* by Phil Goldstein, may be found in Goldstein's book *NOTIONS*¹⁴. In both these effects you chose one of the cards—in Parrish's version the face-up card, in Goldstein's the face-down card—and in neither could the deck be freely shuffled to show the backs and establish that it was what it appeared to be. *Synchroincidence* is offered as a solution to those objections.

¹³Page 32.

¹⁴Page 5.

VESPERS

The following is a very straightforward ESP card divination, created in response to a request from Phil Goldstein a couple of years ago. It can fit nicely into many routines.

EFFECT

Exhibiting an ESP deck, you spread it face up and jog upward one each of the five designs. Removing these five cards from the deck, you turn them face down and hand them to a spectator for mixing.

When this has been done the spectator places the cards on the table and then, without looking at the face, removes one and places it in his pocket. The other cards may be returned to the deck.

Without touching any of the cards you eventually name a design; this proves to be correct when the pocketed card is removed and shown.

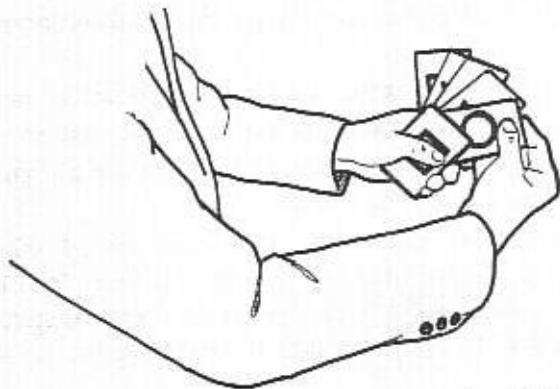
METHOD

The procedure used here combines the one-way principle with a sleight devised by Dai Vernon. As is well known, the standard ESP deck has a one-way back design.

On top of the deck you have four *star* cards, aligned one way; the fifth card down is a *circle*, turned the opposite way. The back orientation of the remaining cards is unimportant; near the face of the deck is another *circle* design.

In performance you hold the deck up on display to one side of your body; the cards are held vertically. Spread the deck until you come to the first *circle* card; this is jogged upward for two-thirds its length. Continuing the spread, you upjog the *cross*, *wavy lines*, *square* and *star* in whatever order you encounter them. (It is preferable that each upjogged card be separated

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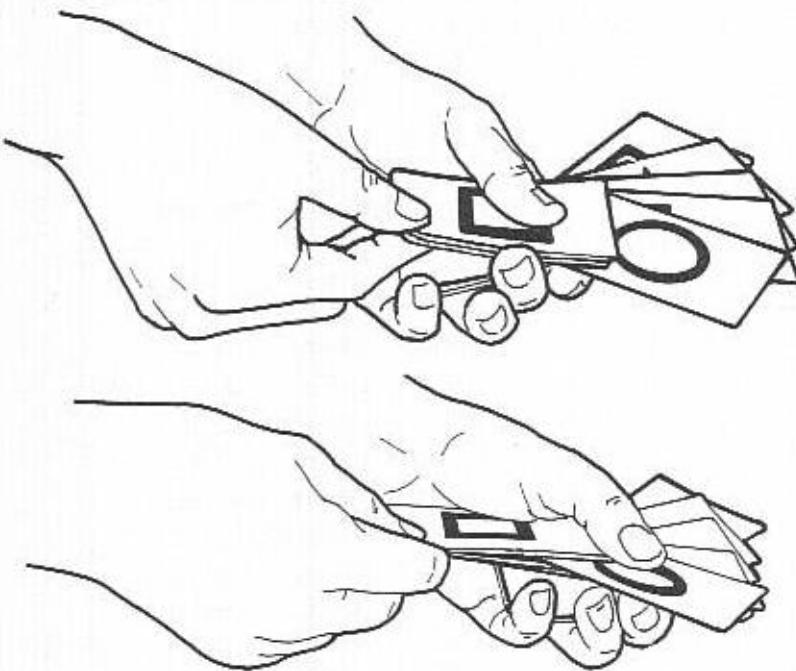


from other upjogged cards by a few cards in the spread proper.)

As the spread is closed and lowered, a break is obtained under the bottom five cards of the face-up deck. You are now in position for the Vernon BDV move (also known as the Vernon strip-out addition), done with the cards face up.

The deck with the five jogged cards is held in the left hand for a moment while the right fingers further spread the jogged cards into a slight fan.

The right hand then moves back and grasps the inner right corner of the deck *above* the break. The left hand, holding the five cards below the break, moves forward and strips out the jogged cards, the slight fan (exaggerated for clarity in the illustrations) concealing the lower set of cards.



A break is maintained between the two groups of cards as the left hand moves back to its former position, apparently just to square up the fanned cards. In reality the five cards above the break are left at the bottom of the face-up deck and the left hand now moves away.

A circle design still shows at the face of the packet, so apparently nothing has changed.

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The cards are handed to the spectator (after turning the packet face down) and he is asked to mix them.

The actual selection can be handled in different ways, but what it boils down to is this: after the spectator has removed a card you glance at the packet.

If you see the reversed card, you know he took one of the four *stars*; if you don't, you know he took the reversed card—the *circle*.

The handling above is for the standing performer; if you are seated, with the spectator facing you, simply outjog the cards as you come to them. In this situation the deck is canted slightly downward at its outer end to better display the faces of the cards to the spectator, and also to make the subsequent move more illusive.

CREDITS

The first person to deal extensively in print with the one-way back on ESP cards was J.G. Thompson in his Extra-Sensory Perfection routine marketed by Ed Mellon.

The strip-out packet switch was, as previously mentioned, devised by Dai Vernon. It may be found in *Phoenix*, No. 248¹⁵. A later, better handling appears in THE VERNON CHRONICLES, VOL. 1¹⁶.

¹⁵Feb. 8, 1952; page 990.

¹⁶Page 79.

FRAMEDOWN

What follows is not an effect, or even a new device—but a few angles that may be incorporated in an age-old forcing device.

The device is the color counting frame, the concept of which was invented in the early part of this century by Stanley Collins¹⁷. Most mentalists will be familiar with this frame; it consists of a four-by-four sixteen-cell square with the force item in squares 1-6-8-14. By rotating the board through ninety, a hundred and eighty or two hundred seventy degrees, any number from one to sixteen can be counted out to arrive at one of the four force squares.

Considerable thought has been expended on the frame; most notably Rupert Gilbert's *Precognition*, which appeared first in *The Gen*¹⁸—and later in *MAGIC OF THE MIND*¹⁹. Gilbert devised a 'dartboard' setup for choosing the number which automatically brought the board into proper orientation for counting; you are referred to the sources mentioned for details.

Louis Histed, in his *Arabian Prediction* in *Abra*²⁰, also came up with some very interesting angles regarding the frame.

What concerned me, however, was that when the board was turned to show the other side to the audience, there should be some clear way of establishing that what was shown as the top of the board was in fact what it seemed.

I will describe what I came up with in terms of a pocket-size device, and then give some hints as to how it might be adapted for stage use.

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¹⁷See his *DECEPTIVE CONCEPTIONS IN MAGIC* (1920), page 63.

¹⁸Vol. 7, No. 1; May 1951; page 10.

¹⁹Page 86.

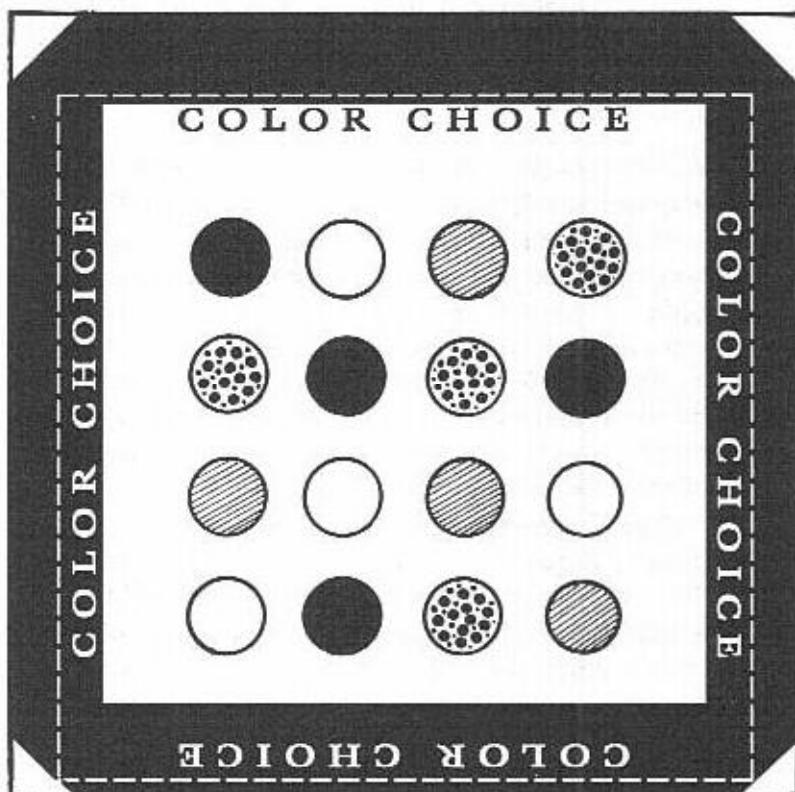
²⁰Vol. 37, No. 959; June 13, 1964; page 356.

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It consists of a small leatherette or vinyl case with a clear plastic window in which the sixteen-cell square is visible; at the 'top' of the square are the words *Color Choice*—or whatever you choose.

By this means—the titling above the square—the 'top' of the frame is established without any need for comment or explanation and without any suspicion being directed toward the board.

A look at the illustration will explain the situation; actually, of course, the *Color Choice* title appears on all four sides of the frame.



The chart is glued or taped to the plastic window; the window is smaller than the case itself, and is able to move in any one of four directions beneath the concealing border at the face of the case.

In each corner are glued triangular pieces of card as indicated; they are glued to both front and back of the frame case. By this means, when your thumb pushes downward, bringing the title into view above the square, the triangles automatically center it at the bottom of the case.

I will leave it to you to work out your own handling of the device.

It does not take too much ingenuity to see how the method here can be applied to a stage-size frame. Such a device could be made from a manila folder and sheet of clear plastic—or could be made of wood, one side having the

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Gilbert dartboard design referred to earlier and the other a wood-grained metal frame within which the color chart could move as required.

One drawback of the frame is that the force design has to appear in four different positions out of the sixteen; Histed solved that with a mechanical 'four-out' prediction slate. Here is a suggestion for a somewhat simpler solution.

You make a prediction and have someone name a number; you then show a chart titled *magickal alphabet* and explain that occultists of old used such alphabets to encode their arcane knowledge, that profane eyes might not discover their secrets.

The number is counted to and the cabalistic symbol noted; it matches your prediction...

ג	נ	ב	ז
ל	ט	ה	מ
ו	י	ח	ש
ר	ך	ל	צ

...while at a casual glance the magickal alphabet seems to consist of sixteen completely different designs, examination of the four force positions will show that they contain the *same* design, positioned in four different ways. (This principle was devised by J.G. Thompson for his *Mentalism By Design*²¹; its use in that effect was very different from the present application.)

You should make your prediction on a square piece of card rather than on a pad with a noticeable top and bottom, for reasons that should be obvious.

One final angle for the use of the frame; this employs a small color chart, say three inches square. On the other side of the card on which the frame is

²¹*Pallbearers Review*, Sixth Folio; page 501.

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drawn can be any kind of printed matter, instructions, etc. You hold the chart as you ask the spectator to name a number.

This done, you turn the chart to face the spectator and count to the number, landing, of course, on a force item.

This is accomplished by the way you turn the card over, of course; half the time you can use a **Crazy Compass-High Sign** move, holding the card by two diagonal corners and twirling it with the fingers of the other hand. The rest of the time you either turn it over forward, through the horizontal plane, or rotate it sidewise through the vertical plane. The **Crazy Compass** move when applicable will be found to appear very natural and excite no suspicion at all...

...hardly a world-shaking discovery, but you may find a use for it.

THE PSYCHIC COERCION OF THE INTERRUPTED SCHOOLBOY

If you want to know the deep meaning behind the rather curious title, skip down to the *Credits*; otherwise, read on...

EFFECT

From a manila envelope just large enough to hold it you remove a school slate; the envelope may be casually shown to be otherwise empty.

The slate is shown blank on both sides, and you divide one side into two sections with a chalk line. Two spectators are asked if they will assist and, on their assent, each initials a section of the slate. The other side of the slate is once more shown blank and the slate is then returned to the manila envelope and set on a chair or stand in full view.

One of the spectators assisting is given a piece of paper and asked to write on it any two-digit number; he retains the paper. The other spectator is asked to freely select a card from a deck; the card he retains.

A third spectator is asked to come forward; after a pause—"I don't know if we gave the spirits enough time..."—you pick up the manila envelope and remove the slate, handing it to the third spectator and asking him to read what it says.

The spectator reads, "The card will be the Three of Hearts and..."—at this point you stop him and ask the person who

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chose the card to remove it. The spectator does so; the card is, of course, the Three of Hearts.

You turn back to the spectator holding the slate and ask him to continue reading the message. "That's all there is," says the spectator, and when you take the slate and show it to the audience this is seen to be the case, the message stopping abruptly about halfway down the slate...

...there is a pause.

You indicate that it is as you feared; the spirits were not given enough time. You replace the slate in the manila envelope. After an appropriate pause the spectator who is thinking of the number is asked to announce it. It is, say, *eighty-one*.

You remove the slate and turn it to face the audience. The message has been completed; it now reads, "*The card will be the Three of Hearts and the number will be 81.*"

METHOD

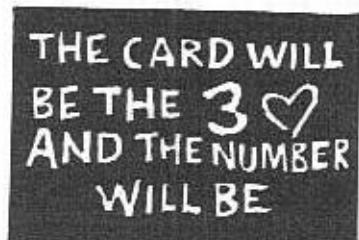
This is a combination of a number of concepts. You will need:

- one slate and flap
- one chalk band-writer
- one manila envelope in which the slate will fit
- one Mental Masterpiece impression card case²²
- one rough-and-smooth forcing deck
- a small piece of paper and a ball-point pen
- a spray can of artists' fixative or Krylon™ transparent sealer

The rough-and-smooth deck is placed in the impression case, the impression gimmick at the face of the deck.

The slate is prepared by having the incomplete message written on the slate proper and the full message on the flap, leaving a space at the end for the number.

In doing this the half-message must, of course, exactly duplicate the upper part of the complete message; a matching smudge or misshapen letter in both messages will add to the deception.



²²See ANNEMANN'S MENTAL BARGAIN EFFECTS, page 5.

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When the messages match to your satisfaction, spray the written surfaces with fixative or Krylon to prevent smudging; after both surfaces are completely dry place the flap on the slate blank side out.

The manila envelope is prepared by having the lower right-hand corner slit open along the two edges for about three inches; if done properly this will not be visible.

To start the performance you remove the slate from the envelope, holding the flap in position with fingers or thumb; the envelope is shown empty. (You belly it open so that the spectators get a view of the unslit bottom corner. The slit if properly made will not be noticed.)

Removing a piece of chalk from your pocket you draw a line across the slate proper (not the flap side) and have two spectators initial it as described in *Effect*. The slate is replaced in the envelope after showing the flap side to be blank. You may also drop the chalk into the envelope; if you do, make sure it falls into the opposite corner from the slit.

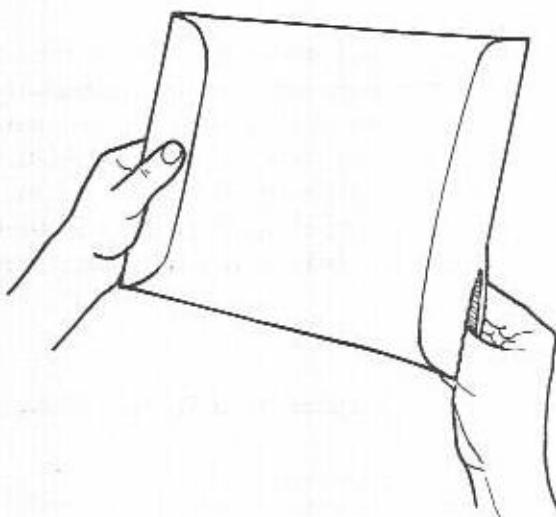
Paper and ball-point pen are removed from one pocket after setting the slate and envelope aside; as you approach one of the assisting spectators the impression case is taken from your pocket and the paper rested on top of it in the usual fashion.

After the spectator has written the number and folded the paper you retrieve the deck. As you go to the other spectator you remove the rough-and-smooth deck from the case, lifting out the impression gimmick far enough to spot the number and then letting it drop back into the case, which you pocket.

The second spectator removes a force card from the deck and pockets it.

As a third spectator is summoned to approach you and assist, obtain the chalk-writer on your thumb.

You pick up the envelope so that the slit will be to the right and remove the slate, *leaving the flap inside*.



As the spectator is reading out the message on the slate, your chalk-writer goes through the slit and writes the number at the end of the complete message. Since all attention is focused on the spectator with the slate this is hardly a problem.

After the revelation of the card, as described in *Effect*, and the subsequent confusion over the

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incomplete message, you retrieve the slate and replace it in the envelope so that the now fully complete message flap will face outward, directly over the incomplete message it conceals.

The effect is now over as far as the working is concerned; you have the spectator who wrote the number announce it, and you then remove the slate and turn it around to show that the spirits have completed the message.

NOTES

You will have to play around with the exact handling of the slate and envelope as befits your style to establish the best way for the flap to end up in proper orientation for the thumb-writing.

If by chance the spectator's writing should not register on the impression gimmick, as sometimes happens, there is absolutely no cause for concern. When you get to the point in the presentation where the first spectator shows the chosen card, you then simply turn to the other one and ask that the privately written number be displayed and named; this seems a perfectly reasonable procedure and weakens the effect very little. As before, while the spectator with the slate reads the message and during the subsequent puzzlement, you have all the time in the world to write the number.

Curiously, this routine will work equally well with a very light touch or with a very heavy dramatic presentation; the combination of methods and procedures seems to rule out any solution to what happens in the course of the routine.

CREDITS

A version of the chalk-writer handling (without the envelope) may be found in Parrish and Goodrum's *YOU'D BE SURPRISED*²³. The basic slate handling is Peter Warlock's, from his *The Schoolbag*²⁴. The impression card case was originally invented by Annemann. The rough-and-smooth deck is generally credited to Ralph Hull.

The Interrupted Spirit concept was devised, to the best of my knowledge, by Robert Nelson,²⁵ in his routine two slates were used and the message begun on one continued on the other. After devising this routine I learned that the idea of an incomplete message being later completed on the same slate had been discussed by U.F. Grant in his book on slate work, *FLAP SLATE WRINKLE*²⁶. All I really claim here is the *routine*; a melding of the principles devised by the above-named creators to produce what I believe is a reasonably strong platform slate-writing presentation.

²³Page 20.

²⁴*The Jinx*, Summer 1939 Extra; page 414, where it is titled *The Satchel*—and ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 196.

²⁵A marketed effect which included slates and instructions.

²⁶Page 4.

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Final credit note: the combination of forced card and thumb-written number is from Annemann's *Triple Coercion*²⁷; the Parrish effect first mentioned is called *Slate Psychics*; and of course an inspiration was Warlock's above-mentioned *The Schoolbag*.

Hence the title....

²⁷*The Jinx*, No. 21; June 1936; page 123—also PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 129.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

Box Office: see *Handhook*—page 496

Burning Questions: see *Decivision*—page 732

Unknown Power: see *Tapinage*—page 297
and *Geminight*—page 515

Synchroincidence: see *Synchrowave*—page 691

Framedown: see *On The Color-Counting Frame*—page 435

The Psychic Coercion Of The Interrupted Schoolboy: see *Elementeerie*—page 251
and *Palimpsest*—page 576

CERBERUS

[1981]

THIS SECTION CONCERNS itself with a classic routine of mentalism—the three-phase prediction. We'll discuss close-up and platform routines as well as new approaches in methodology and presentation.

In classical mythology *Cerberus* is the three-headed beast who guards the gates of Hades. A fearsome creature, he can turn viciously on those who thought they knew how to handle him.

He therefore seems an appropriate icon to symbolize the three-phase prophecy—a classic routine in mentalism which, like this Hound of Hell, can give you a nasty bite if you're not careful.

What do I mean by that?

Simply this: Cerberic (we'll adjectivize the name) predictions do not tend to have a middle ground of acceptance. Either they are perceived as what the mentalist intends—a prediction miracle—or they are transparently obvious and a waste of the spectators' time.

Which of these two reactions is inspired in the mind of the spectator depends in greater and lesser degree on two things: *presentational procedure* and *technique*. The purpose of this manuscript is to provide some hard information in both these areas. First, however, let's consider the Cerberic prediction as it currently exists.

There have been literally dozens of three-phase predictions in print based on the one-behind principle. Since, from a magical point of view, the fear is that the spectators may suspect that the performer is not writing what he or she claims in each phase of the effect, a great deal of ingenuity has been expended on creating procedures that supposedly eliminate this weak spot. We have had double-and-triple-writing pens, different-colored cards, ways of altering numbers, mechanical stands and slates—and very few of these have, to my mind, succeeded in accomplishing what they set out to do.

Why? Because any procedure in which you go to great and inconvenient lengths to prove you *aren't* doing something will immediately suggest to the spectators that you *are* doing it—and once they have that thought in mind it really doesn't matter if they can't figure out the exact procedure.

Most of the trepidation about Cerberic effects comes from the feeling that the basic technique—pretending to make a prediction, having a choice made

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and then recording that choice in the guise of making a further prediction—is too obvious.

This fear is well-founded.

The procedure is obvious; a bald performance of it will fool only the very slowest minds. Indeed, many of the spectators may themselves have done the one-behind routine with a deck of cards (having them named and then pulling them out of the deck until the first taken card, usually the Ace of Spades, is named).

Unfortunately, the way most performers try to combat this knowledge or suspicion is by increasingly arcane and illogical marking procedures, the convolutions of which are justified by the requirements of the methodology rather than any presentational concept.

This, as I've indicated, is a dead end; it leads finally to people wondering how you make the writing jump around on the papers...

...one of the major difficulties, indicated in the way we have been referring to *predictions* and *prophecies*, is that these routines are in fact usually presented as predictions.

Predictions, as most experienced mentalists know, are by far the most difficult to put over convincingly; the same spectators who will accept demonstrations of telepathy, clairvoyance—and even psychokinesis!—without blinking—will flatly refuse to accept any kind of prediction as being in any way real. More than once I have seen competently presented mental acts drop stone dead when a strong prediction was presented; the reaction clearly being, "Oh, that has to be a trick... he's a magician..."

(For those who perform as magicians this particular reaction is not a problem; however, considering the time it takes to perform Cerberic routines, as magical effects they are poor investments, being somewhat less effective than straightforward magic. Only as apparent realities do they have any value.)

There are two basic alternatives to the prediction premise; that of the spectator reading the performer's mind—and that of the performer controlling or influencing the spectator's thought/choice.

Of these two the first is the easier and more acceptable approach, since it creates the appearance of the spectator accomplishing something wonderful—while the second has the appearance (and sometimes the fact) of the performer dominating the spectator. It takes a very special kind of performer to make this latter approach palatable.

Another advantage of the spectator-as-mindreader approach is that since the burden of accomplishment is supposedly on a member of the audience, there is far less attention directed to the specifics of the technical procedures than occurs when the performer is demonstrating his own supposed powers.

We will return to specifics of presentation further on; let's now turn to some special considerations.

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It is worth noting that one of the reasons the basic procedure of Cerberic routines is suspect is that the mentalist is *made aware of each choice before making the next prediction*; clearly, if the choices are *not* announced until the climax of the routine—and the performer has no apparent way of knowing what those choices are—it does not seem to the spectator that there would be any way the performer could apply the one-behind methodology. Any suspicions the spectator might have regarding the standard methodology are thus effectively defused.

It would seem that so efficient a way of strengthening the basic Cerberic routine would have become popular, and that several presentations would be available. Surprisingly, this is not true: while one of the very earliest routines of this type, Bill Wagner's *Three Card Prediction*¹, used this concept of secret selections, little attention has been paid to it since then. Except for Judge E.H.C. Wethered's *Variations On The Taped Slate*, which appeared three decades ago in Peter Warlock's *Pentagram*², almost nothing has been written on the subject.

Since a very large part of mentalism technique is the *post facto* acquisition of information regarding a spectator's secret selection or choice, it would be impractical to do more than offer some general suggestions.

If the routine involves card selections, for example, there are almost too many ways of learning the spectator's choice; we have key cards, stacked decks, marked and stripped cards—the possibilities are infinite.

Let's take just one specific route the performer might follow...

¹*Linking Ring*, Vol. 28, No. 12; Feb. 1949; page 57.

²Vol. 9, No. 7; April 1955; page 50.

TRIDEX

A deck of cards, stacked in your favorite arrangement and with one card corner-trimmed (the one you will force in the third phase) is placed in a Mental Masterpiece impression card case.

The routine is straightforward; you make a prediction for Spectator No. 1 (actually writing the identity of the corner-short card you will force on No. 3, of course), and No. 1 makes a note of any card using the card case as backing. You remove the deck from the case, glimpsing the impression, and in the guise of writing No. 2's prediction do the requisite prophecy for No. 1. Spectator No. 2 now selects a card with the deck in his or her own hands; any handling is used that will provide you with a chance to glimpse the next card in the stack as you recover the pack—and thus learn No. 2's card, the prophecy for which is made as you apparently make a prediction for No. 3. It now remains only to locate the corner-short and force it in the most convincing manner at your disposal—a riffle-force, for example—to bring the effect to a successful conclusion.

BOOKA

There are those mentalists who hold the view (which I do not share) that cards are out of place in a mentalistic presentation. For them, let's provide an adaptation of the handling above, applied to a Cerberic book-test sequence.

To do this we will employ a book that has been rather heavily gaffed—but this should not cause any concern to the astute performer, who will realize that all of this is part of the *secondary* procedure—i.e., since presumably the prediction has already been made when the spectator goes through the selection procedure, then as long as those selections appear to be free ones there is little 'heat' on this phase of the methodology.

The book is prepared as an impression book; there are several descriptions in print of such devices, of which perhaps the best is that of Al Koran's *A Word in Thousands*, to be found in KORAN'S LEGACY by Hugh Miller³ and in Volume 6 of the TARBELL COURSE IN MAGIC⁴; also, the faked book is still available from a few dealers.

The book is further prepared as a 'peek-book' (in the manner popularized by Paul Curry, Danny Tong, Larry Becker and others) so that when the spectator looks at the first word on the left-hand page as you riffle the pages, the same word is on view to you on the right-hand page corner. (If you perform the mnemonic version of Orville Meyer's Incredibly Book Test—in which you simply link the first word on each left-hand page with the last word in the first sentence of the right-hand page—you can forgo this part of the preparation.)

³Page 65.

⁴Page 247.

CERBERUS

Finally, pages are trimmed in two or three different spots where they will riffle-force the same word⁵.

As with the card procedure described in *Tridex* above, the routine should be readily apparent: No. 1 chooses a word in some random fashion from the book, and writes the word on a slip (using the book for backing); you note this word on the impression surface. Spectator No. 2 freely chooses a word as the pages are rifled; you learn this by the peek-book device. To conclude, No. 3 falls victim to the riffle-force.

(A note on this last selection: when No. 2 makes his choice you subtly emphasize the genuine freedom of selection, satisfying all on that score, perhaps even overdoing it a bit—so that when apparently the same procedure is followed with No. 3 any suspicion has already been effectively disarmed.)

You have made your predictions at the appropriate points, of course, and everything checks out at the finish. Since, aside from the predictions, the only properties used are the one book and the pencil and paper employed by No. 1, the routine plays very straightforwardly indeed.

You may if you wish construct a patter line concerning random choice, selective choice and chance; this will fit in with the procedure of the various selections.

(Note: I have described these routines in simple structural terms; since my purpose is simply to illustrate a procedure, I have not built them up with the usual adjectival decoration. For all that, these are reasonably strong and baffling routines, so don't let the brevity of my description give you the impression that they aren't worthwhile; they are.)

From the two examples given above it should be clear that there is no problem in applying the secret-choice subtechnique to Cerberic routines. In addition to the hundreds of methods evolved within mentalistic technique to discover selections, there are a great number of mechanical gadgets available to the performer, ranging from items as simple as Dial-X and Color Vision to Byzantine electronic devices.

I hope that if you choose to use such items as an adjunct to Cerberic routines, you do so with a certain amount of restraint and moderation.



From my remarks at the beginning of this section it may be inferred that I do not think that the predictions should be marked to differentiate them. Such is not the case: along with the secret-choice techniques, marking procedures can work to convince the spectator of the apparent reality of the routine—but only if the marking is not the focus of attention.

⁵For full details on this kind of preparation see Al Mann's book test routines in Volume Four of Nelson's SENSATIONAL MENTALISM series, page 7.

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Aside from the implied sequencing it indicates, from the spectator's point of view there are only two reasons why predictions would be specifically marked:

- a. *Categories*—if the choices come from three different areas (a city, number and design, for example), they might be marked with those general classifications.
- b. *Identity*—if three people are taking part, the marking would conveniently serve to identify which prediction belongs to which person (as in Peter Warlock's *Patient Telepath*⁶). Note: this only makes sense if the *choices* are all in the same category.

A bit of logic applied to the above will show that in neither case is marking really necessary, since category or identity could be inferred by the actual contents of the prediction paper—but it *seems* reasonable to the spectator, and this is what's important.

As the above implies, there are two basic ways of presenting a Cerberic routine: first—using one spectator for three successive tests; and second—involving three different spectators in the proceedings.

Each has its advantages: with the one-person approach, the performer can create a routine of tests that seemingly grow more difficult at each successive step, the presentation taking the line that as you warm up, you are able to succeed at more arduous tasks. An excellent example of this kind of routine is Ron Baillie's *Prestimentalation* (!).⁷

Also, there are some particular routines which, while performable with three spectators, have a more logical-seeming procedure when done with one person only⁸.

In most parlor or platform situations, however, it is better to devise routines which involve three spectators; such routines give the other spectators more to look at, and carry the subtext that you can succeed in this test with anyone, not just a particular individual.

(Note: Let me make a brief digression. In getting spectators up for routines where several spectators are on stage, do not—unless your particular angle of presentation requires it—choose a number of people seated together. For one thing, they may tend to cross-chat or joke with each other, or even conspire to create a bit of trouble for you, which is much less likely to happen with people who are strangers to each other.

(Also—if you form your onstage group from single individuals extracted from their own little cliques in the audience, those cliques become claques;

⁶The Gen, Vol. 10, No. 9; Jan. 1955; page 251—and in the Lewis Ganson-edited book MAGIC OF THE MIND, page 20.

⁷Which can be found in Pentagram, Vol. 6, No. 6; March 1952; page 44.

⁸An example would be Dr. Jaks' Close Up Slate Routine which appeared in The Gen, Vol. 17, No. 10; Feb. 1962; page 263.

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they respond to the activities of their representative on stage and—if you have picked from widely separated points—your onstage group inspires several pockets of enthusiasm that tend to carry the rest of the audience along. The result is a stronger reaction to the effect than would be the case had you brought up people from just one little group.)

One more general point requires discussion—that of the force used on Phase No. 3 to cover the first-written prediction.

It has been pointed out before (by Tony Shiels among others) that this is where many Cerberic routines fall down; offering the spectator(s) virtually unlimited choices for the first and second tests, and then presenting them with the sharply delimited choice of fifty-two cards for the final phase.

Why? In most cases it would seem that the only reason lies in the performer's possession of a forcing pack, which represents the only force he or she is confident of bringing off successfully...

...and of course I have nothing against forcing packs, *used appropriately*. One can be used in the Tony Shiels *Psychic Chance* routine in *Invocation*⁹—because Tony has created a presentation that builds up to it logically from 'less difficult' tests.

It should also be pointed out that these days you have available to you a large selection of word-forcing books, magazines, sonnet folios, etc., to choose from (pun intended); and if you find such items too expensive or otherwise unsuitable, you can certainly manage to obtain a copy of Annemann's 202 METHODS OF FORCING and give it a careful perusal.

Perhaps the two best solutions to this problem came from the mind of Dr. Jaks. In his *Close-up Slate Routine*, mentioned earlier, he used a card force—but he had devised a procedure in which the force was used in the *second* phase, not the final one! It is surprising how little attention this concept drew.

The second approach devised by Dr. Jaks was elegantly simple—to use no force at all! In his *This Way Out*¹⁰ he used a presentational procedure where he attempted the first two prophecies but had a spectator try the third—and here a psychological force was used; if it worked, fine, and if it didn't it was the spectator who had failed, not the performer.

While this specific angle—blaming the spectator for a supposed mistake—is best avoided by those of us who do not possess Dr. Jaks' continental charm—the general procedure can certainly be used. We might try predictions of increasing difficulty, our third phase using a procedure with a good percentage of success but not a certainty. If the gods are with us, we can proceed with our revelations to produce a boffo effect to heavy mitting.

⁹Vol. 1, No. 5; July 1975; page 66.

¹⁰Which appeared in *Mental-Wise*, Vol. 5, No. 1; page 212.

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If, however, a less beneficent deity is in charge of our activities that day, we admit we have failed—and show the incorrect prophecy *first*, so that we can follow by showing the two earlier prophecies to be correct.

Obviously such a procedure has its time and place; if you work for money, as performer rather than 'psychic', stick with a good force—people don't pay to see you fail in show business unless you jump motorcycles over buses and geographical impedimenta.

Yet another solution to this problem is to use as your supposed first prediction a null or dummy slip. At the appropriate point in the routine a spectator makes a choice from a group covered by a set of predictions in a pocket index. You steal out the proper billet and switch it in for the dummy. (This can be accomplished easily by the Stanley Collins utility move, in which as you dump the three slips from one hand to the other, you retain the dummy in your palm and the two slips join the one in the other hand.)

Alternatively, you can engage in pocket-writing—if (a) the field of choice is simple enough, such as a two-digit number, (b) your performing wear has pockets, and (c) you can do the pocket-writing without appearing awkward or worse.

Still another possibility is a Swami gimmick (nail- or thumb-writer), with which you fill in the prediction as you open the paper.

Unfortunately, application of any of these techniques comes at the precise moment when attention is keenest, thus a very high degree of technical skill and misdirection is required to bring this off successfully.

I'm now going to discuss two specific routines—the first for intimate, impromptu situations, and the second for parlor or platform.

TRIPOSTE

Of the many creator/inventor/performers who have worked on Cerberic routines, perhaps the foremost exponent is Peter Warlock; in addition to inventing *The Taped Slate*¹¹—on which the somewhat less-convincing marketed prop Mental Epic is based—he has come up with such versions of the triple prediction as *A Warlock's Prediction*¹² (later marketed by Al Koran in a slightly adapted version) and *The Patient Telepath*.

Here, however, we're going to work with an effect of his called *Caught Thoughts*—which appeared in his *Pentagram* as part of a two-person act entitled *The Lady And The Tramp*¹³. I stress that what follows is an *adaptation* of the Warlock effect to close-up, with alterations in properties, procedure and handling.

EFFECT

You remove from your pocket a pencil and a small side-bound spiral notebook (the notebook is about three inches wide by five inches tall; the paper is of the kind that has an unlined section at the top of the leaf). Opening the notebook, you tear out the upper one-third of a leaf; the middle third is then torn out, followed by the bottom third. As the pieces are torn out you place them on the table in order from top to bottom—the bottom piece nearest you, the upper or top piece nearest the spectator seated across the table, the middle piece...in the middle...

...this done, you fold the cover back behind the rest of the pad and pick up the top third of the three torn pieces.

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¹¹*Pentagram*, Vol. 11, No. 10; July 1957; page 75—also in his book PATTERNS FOR PSYCHICS, page 17.

¹²*Pentagram*, Vol. 12, No. 1; Oct. 1957; page 4—and in PATTERNS FOR PSYCHICS, page 31.

¹³Vol. 10, No. 6; March 1956; page 43; and No. 7; April 1956; page 49.

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Resting this piece against the pad you write a prediction; the paper is then crumpled into a small ball and placed to one side. You ask the spectator taking part to make a choice of some kind as is appropriate, and if desired another spectator makes a note of it.

You say you will make another prediction; the middle piece of paper is now picked up and rested against the pad, and as before another prediction is written. Again the paper is crumpled and placed beside the first prediction, and a second choice is made by the spectator.

The same procedure is repeated with the last piece of paper (the original bottom segment) and after the final choice has been made the pieces are all gathered and handed to the spectator to open.

Needless to say, all the predictions are correct...

...but the point of all this rests in the fact that while you did not bother to number the predictions, it will register with the spectators that Prediction No. 1 is on the *top* segment of the paper, Prediction No. 2 is on the *middle* piece, and Prediction No. 3 is on the *bottom*, exactly as they should be; it is very easy to tell the three pieces apart, as examination of any spiral-bound sheet will show.

METHOD

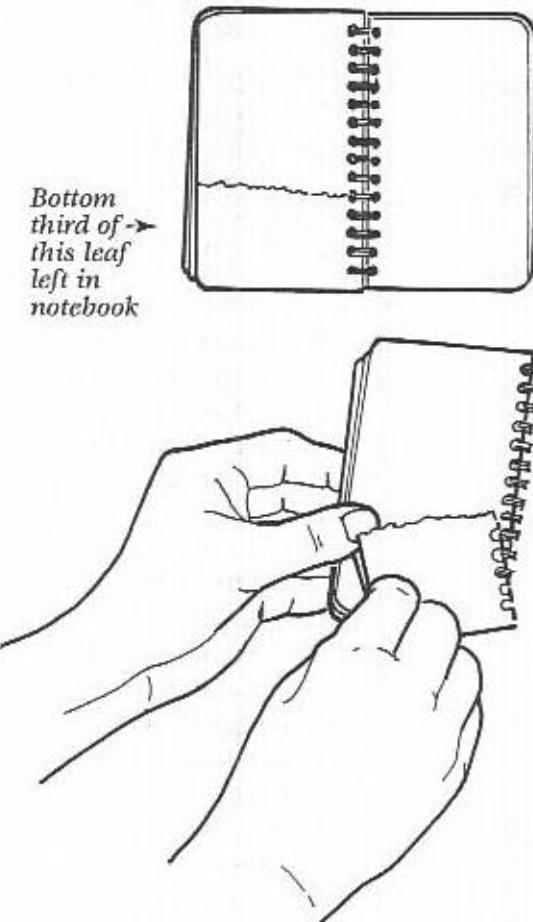
A bit of preparation is required; it will take about ten seconds. From the page *behind* the one you are going to use tear off the upper two-thirds of the leaf; discard this piece.

That's it.

In performance: you open the notebook and tear out the top and middle pieces as previously described; the only point here is that the second horizontal tear—the lower edge of the middle piece—should be made at the same point as was done on the page below, so that when the middle piece has been removed the two bottom pieces that remain are about the same size.

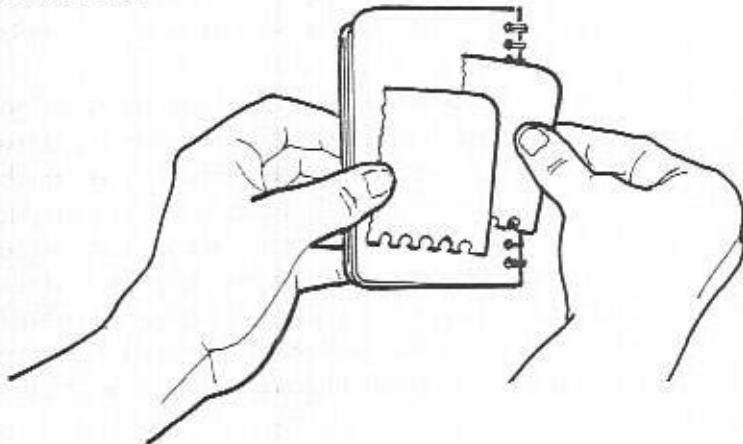
Both these pieces are torn as one from the notebook but not

Bottom
third of →
this leaf
left in
notebook



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moved very far away from it; they are then rested on it briefly while you patter. As you talk your thumb pushes the two pieces slightly apart, and it is the *lowermost* of the two pieces which is taken away and placed on the table. The spectators are of course not aware of the extra piece concealed by the notebook.



The top piece is taken from the table and rested against the notebook; actually it is slid *under* the piece already there. The prediction is written on this upper piece (the original bottom segment) and it is crumpled and placed to one side.

The same procedure is followed for the second and third predictions; the piece from the table being put under the piece resting on the pad, and the upper piece being written on and placed to one side after being crumpled into a ball.

After the third prediction has been made and placed down, the notebook is simply closed and replaced in the pocket, taking the duplicate piece with it.

It will be noted that this procedure leaves the spectators with the actual three segments of the original piece of paper which they can fit together like a jigsaw if they should want to; you, of course, make no mention of such a possibility.

NOTES

Beyond the general suggestions earlier I am giving no description of what *kind* of predictions are made, or what force (if any) is used for the final phase; my only purpose here is to describe a specific procedure.

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Two points of importance:

A pencil or ink-pen should be used—not a ball-point pen—as they may make an impression which would carry through to the lower of the two papers. For the same reason you cannot use marking pens that tend to bleed through the paper.

It will be found that giving the notebook a slight convex crimp along its vertical axis will make it a bit easier to slide one piece of paper under another.

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Alternatively, you could paste a thin cardboard strip down the center of the inside back cover; this ridge would produce the same effect in a more certain manner.

It will occur to some that since the procedure needed to prepare the notebook for the basic routine is so simple, it could actually be done in front of the spectators, perhaps tearing out the two-thirds leaf to use in some earlier effect.

It *can* be done—it is possible to do something along these lines and get away with it—but why? You only need ten seconds unobserved to be prepared to do it right, and there's really little point in doing something earlier which might give the astute spectator a clue to the method, however clever or 'gutsy' it might make you feel. Improvising to get out of trouble is to be lauded; improvising as a way of covering sloppy technique, or just to be cute, is quite another thing. Mentalism as a performance art is among the very toughest to bring off successfully; there is no place in it for a haphazard approach unless you're a genius...and that's a determination you'll have to make for yourself.

O.T.L. OMEGA

Our second Cerberic routine is a child of many fathers; the basic principle was used by Edward Bagshawe¹⁴ and later used by Audley Walsh in his *Open Minds* effect published in *The Jinx*¹⁵. The most popular application, however, was the commercially marketed Bob Ellis-Clare Cummings Out To Lunch pocket trick, and most subsequent references claim it as the starting point.

The principle used is that of the half-card which, placed over a complete card and aligned at one end, masks half of the complete card from view. A rubber band snapped around a packet of cards conceals the other end of the half-card, and the card appears as a continuous whole. With a packet so prepared, anything written on the full card in the area directly beneath the masking half-card is concealed from view—and the strong point (adapted from a similar slate angle) is that the apparently blank card may be initialed by a spectator.

In the routine I am about to describe, half-cards as such are not used; nothing is required but the index cards, a rubber band and a pen or pencil. The preparation—to be given further on—takes only a couple of minutes.

EFFECT

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You hold in your hands a packet of about a dozen index cards; a rubber band has been snapped around the center of the packet. You also have a pen or pencil.

You ask a spectator his initials; these are, for example, AB—you write them on the upper half of the card and show this has

¹⁴See *The Recurring Name* in his TWENTY MAGICAL NOVELTIES, page 57.

¹⁵No. 81; page 523.

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been done. You then write a prophecy for AB on the card and remove it from the packet, setting it down on the table or into a glass, etc.

This same procedure is followed with two other spectators—MN and YZ, let's say; in each case the card is clearly initialed and shown before you write down your prophecy and extract the card, placing it down with the previous prediction.

The usual selections have taken place as per the standard Cerberic routine; naturally, at the conclusion of the effect all the prophecies are seen to be correct.

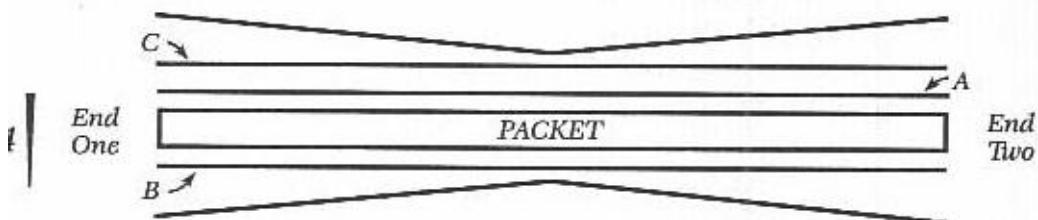
What sets this routine apart from previous entries in this area is that the three cards can be marked in any way the performer wants—initials, as indicated above—but also they could be categorized as *animal-vegetable-mineral*, *book-page-word* (in conjunction with Phil Goldstein's excellent Isolation routine), or *word-number-picture*. This very specific labeling either as to category or identity, while a logical-seeming procedure, virtually appears to rule out the application of a one-behind principle.

METHOD

The actual mechanics of this routine might be described as something of a cross between the Out-Tb-Lunch technique previously described and the principle of the old flap-changing card. Although the setup is very simple, it may read a bit complicated, so it is best followed with cards in hand.

For this you'll need about a dozen index cards which must be of the *unlined* variety. You'll also need a pen or pencil and a rubber band that will go comfortably around the packet of cards *three times*.

Take two of the cards, fold them in half and crease the folds, and then straighten them out. Set them aside for the moment and, taking three other cards, mark them A, B and C (this is used as an example to explain the principle). This done, assemble the packet as per the diagram.



The folded cards are inserted under the middle *one* of the three strands of the rubber band; when they are folded over in either direction a length of band should be visible, concealing the flap line.

If the packet has been correctly assembled it should appear to be simply a group of index cards with a rubber band snapped around it; it can be freely shown.

PROCEDURE

The packet is placed in the left hand so that the C card is second from the top of the packet and at the upper end above the thumb (End One in the diagram). As the right hand sets the packet into the left the right thumb contacts the middle of End Two and swings the card up into its folded position.

(The situation is now that a folded card is on the upper end of the packet, directly above marked card C. It is understood that whatever markings are used can only occupy the upper half of a prediction card.)

You mark the upper half with an A and exhibit this to the spectators; the rubber band conceals the fold line and all seems fair.

Turning the cards back toward yourself, you now write on the *lower* half (which is that of the actual card C) your prediction for Phase C—which is whatever will result from your forcing procedure. The card is then taken by this lower end and pulled free of the packet. It is placed in a glass, on an easel, etc., writing away from the audience.

As this is done the left thumb flips down the folded card to its original position; again, now, the packet appears to be ordinary and unmarked and may be freely handled.

While you discuss the second prediction to be made you turn the packet around end for end (*not over*; the same side is still facing you).

You now repeat the mechanics of the first phase, i.e., your right thumb flips up the folded card—you mark this new upper half with a B and show it—on the lower half (of the real A card) you make the supposed prediction for A based on what you have learned of A's choice by means previously discussed—and this card is extracted and placed with the first prediction.

Again you flip the folded card back into position, and again the packet appears normal.

For the third phase you grasp the packet by the upper end in your right hand and flip it end *over* end. You are now set to mark prediction C and make out the prediction for B, removing it and placing it with the other two predictions.

Of course you've flipped the folded card on the packet back into its starting position and again the packet looks perfectly fair, just as it did at the beginning of the routine.

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NOTES

A small amount of misdirection may sometimes be needed to cover the flipping of the cards—but if you take reasonable care with your angles even this is not necessary. You will find that you can drop your hand to your side as you talk and make the necessary moves with your thumb.

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Do remember that the only time attention is focused on the cards is when you're writing on them—and then you aren't making any moves.

In the version first described, the spectators' initials are used; clearly, if this is the case, you'll have to learn what they are a few minutes beforehand to prepare the packet. This can be done in dozens of ways: in a nightclub from the maitre'd—at a business meeting from the organizer—at a trade show by spotting a few name tags—etc. If it is appropriate to the routine you have in mind, the use of the initials is worth a little bit of extra trouble beforehand.

Given the setup described, it is no problem at all to do a *four*-phase routine, simply setting up C and D in the same manner as A and B.

Some interesting presentations are possible: you might adapt the aforementioned Baillie *Prestimentalation* (!) effect so that you predict first a suit color (red or black)—then a card suit—a card value—and finally a specific card.

Unless, however, you can come up with an angle of presentation as logical as Baillie's, it is better to stick with just three predictions; they're enough to prove your point.

You will also note that there's nothing to prevent you from putting in additional index cards on either side of the setup packet section for use in an earlier effect.

As to effects done *after* this routine—again, as with the close-up routine, it is probably possible to figure out a clever-clever way to get rid of the two folded cards; it is a lot simpler just to put them away in your pocket and presently take out a similar packet.

It will not have escaped those of peculiar mind that by combining a couple of blank index cards with a packet of those lined on one side, the routine *can* be performed with such cards. This only has two real points of value—first, if a subsequent or prior effect requires the use of lined cards it would be better to appear to be using the same cards in the various effects...

...second, and somewhat more important, it means that if you use advertising postcards or some such thing (printed on one side only), you can do this routine by adding a couple of cards for the folding gaffs from matching blank stock.

As I have indicated, the markings to differentiate the predictions can be virtually anything so long as they only take up the upper half of the card. Don't let this fact carry you away, because all of these markings have to be duplicated to at least a reasonable degree by you in performance, and a couple of initials will make less demands on your calligraphic skills than some arcane sigil.

If you want to paint this particular lily you can always make some 'mistake' in the marking of a prediction which is matched on the card they eventually see—but while a few spectators may note this, the procedure is already strong enough that it is not likely to add noticeably to their puzzlement.

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Given the immediately preceding statement, you will appreciate that it is *not* necessary to introduce further diabolical variations involving tricolor pens and suchlike; the routine as it stands will convince or at the worst baffle its viewers—and anything further will simply be complication for its own sake.



In the descriptions of the two preceding routines I have used the words *prediction* and *prophecy* simply because they are readily understood, whereas terms like *projection* and *target-item* might not read as clearly.

As I have indicated, predictions as such are very strong effects—perhaps *too* strong for convincing mentalism in most hands, where 'projection' and 'spectator-as-mindreader' routines would more readily find acceptance.

You have here the tools for either presentation; how you use them is up to you.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

For another handling of the three-phase prediction see:

Threesum—page 557.

Items of related interest are:

Circlet—page 688

Wheelie—page 324

TRIONIC

[1981]

As J.G. Thompson once said, "Twenty years is a long time to keep a secret." The routine about to be described is older than that; I put it together and first used it in 1959.

After the death of my good friend Dr. Stanley Jaks, Felix Greenfield (who assisted with the estate) came into possession of the fabled Book Of Magic used by Dr. Jaks in his close-up performances. (There were actually *three* such books—but that's another story.) Many of the items were unfamiliar to Felix; he asked me to run through the Book's various effects.

I agreed, and we spent a pleasant day doing just that.

At one point during that afternoon I interrupted the demonstration long enough to do my *Trionic* routine; Felix immediately offered to buy exclusive performing rights to the routine and—with the proviso that Felix not perform the routine for magicians—a deal was concluded.

With Felix's passing I was again the only person who knew the routine. In recent years I have revealed the handling of the 'telepathy' portion of the sequence to a few close friends; one only—Phil Goldstein—has seen the complete three-part presentation.

Here is the routine as it appears to the spectator:

You are seated across the table from your subject; you remove from your pocket a cased deck of cards and an index card which has been folded once each way. The spectator is requested to put the index card in pocket or purse for the time being.

Removing the deck from the case, you explain that there are always psychological factors involved in the choice of a card. If you were to ask the spectator to 'choose a card'—you spread the cards in the usual manner—the spectator might be influenced by the position of a card in the spread. Again, if the cards were spread face up on the table—you do a face-up ribbon-spread—the spectator might go for a card because of its appearance.

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Gathering up the cards you hand them to the spectator and request a thorough shuffle; this completed, the spectator is further instructed to give the deck several straight cuts.

This, you explain, is to insure that the choice about to be made will be completely random.

Test No. One

You turn your back and tell the spectator to cut the deck a few more times. When this has been done the spectator is instructed to turn the top card of the deck face up and remember it, fixing it firmly in mind. The card is then to be pushed, *still face up*, into the center of the deck. The deck in turn is to be replaced in the card case, flap tucked in, and the cased deck placed on the table. Only after the spectator indicates this has been done do you turn around.

Picking up the deck (in case) you touch it to your forehead. You then gradually reveal the name of the thought-of card; *in doing this you do not appear to make a single mistake.*

The spectator admits you are correct.

Test No. Two

Removing the deck from its case you right the reversed card.

It is explained that this second experiment will be a bit more difficult; while in the telepathy test just concluded you had another mind to work with, here the spectator will not be aware of the selection and you will have to sense the psychometric vibration of the card itself (!).

Turning your back you ask the spectator to cut the deck a few times as was done before, and then to remove the top card. This time, however, the card is *not* to be turned over; instead the spectator is to turn the *deck* over and push the face-down card into the center of the face-up deck. This done, the deck is to be turned face down again and replaced in the case. The spectator performs this action.

Turning to face the spectator, you take the deck as before and touch it to your forehead. Again a card is in a gradual fashion revealed. When the deck is removed from the case and spread out face down, the face-up card proves to be the one the you have just named.

Test No. Three

As before the card is righted and the deck handed to the spectator. This time, you say, there will be no need for you to turn away.

Again the spectator is asked to cut the cards as many times as desired. Eventually, when satisfied, the spectator is asked to turn over the top card of the deck.

Now you remind the spectator of the index card and ask that it be brought forth and read. In bold strokes of a marking pen is written the name of the card just decided upon.

TRIONIC

That concludes the routine.

PREPARATION

Before going into the requirements of this routine and the specific procedures used to bring about the effects, let's consider for a moment the basic structure.

In each case you appear to have the spectator go through the same action to make a selection—and that action itself appears eminently fair. Indeed, it is fair—although two of the selections are fairer than the third...

...also, since the actions of the selection seem in all important aspects identical, the skeptical spectator will try to find a solution that will cover all three demonstrations—and since each uses a different technique, analytical efforts along this line are doomed to failure.

I will go into presentation aspects, variations of procedure, etc., later on in this manuscript. For the present I will make just one observation with this routine:

It has been designed to be *the one thing* you do with a deck of cards when asked to demonstrate mentalism. It covers the three major phases of ESP with what I honestly believe are the strongest effects possible with a deck of cards; there's little point in preceding it with lesser items—and *certainly* no point in following it with them. Some further points on this will be given later.

For this routine you will need:

- Six decks of playing cards
- An X-acto™ knife or razor blade
- A stylus (or ball-point pen empty of ink)
- An index card
- A marking pen
- A jar of rubber cement

The Cards

Let's talk briefly about the kind of cards you will be using.

The two varieties of cards used most by magicians—and some mentalists—are the Fox Lake bridge-size cards or one of the poker-size decks with Tally-Ho or Bicycle backs. I do not recommend either of these for the present routine. The Fox Lake back is sometimes associated with trick decks and is otherwise not often seen among social card players—and the Tally-Ho and Bicycle poker-size cards, though somewhat more popular and certainly acceptable, are still somewhat unusual-looking to many people.

I recommend you purchase your decks in a Woolworth's or similar variety store, selecting the kind of nondescript bridge deck that one might find anywhere and therefore does not look as though it was *purchased to do this routine*.

For technical reasons which will become clear as I describe the routine, a few points regarding these cards:

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1. They should have white borders on the back; faces should be white also, not tinted.
2. The back design should be of a reasonably complex abstract pattern in the darker range of hues; a back of primarily solid color must *not* be used.
3. The deck must not have metallic (gold or silver) edging.
4. The case must be of the standard end-opening flap type, not a drawer model; if possible get a case which has a sample card glued on the back.

Do bear in mind that the routine can be done with just about any deck design; I am simply pointing out aspects that will give the best possible results.

From five of the decks remove the following cards:

HEARTS: Six, Nine and King

CLUBS: Seven and Jack

DIAMONDS: Ace and Two

SPADES: Three, Five and Queen

Assemble these into a deck of fifty cards and put them in one of the cases. To the back of this case (i.e., the flap side) glue two Jokers, carefully squared and back side facing out. (If the case already has a card glued to it just glue one additional card above the one already here.)

We'll call that Deck One; it is now completed.

From the sixth (complete) deck remove the Queen of Spades and place it face up on the table, with an advertising card or Joker from one of the decks underneath it to act as a cushion for what follows.

Carefully run the stylus along the four borders of the Queen's picture; if necessary you can use a ruler to make an exact job of it. If this is done correctly it will create a raised ridge along the back of the card; though this ridge is absolutely invisible either from front or back, you will find that if you place it in the deck it is almost impossible not to bring it to the top with just two or three cuts.

We're not quite done with the Queen, however; with the X-acto knife or blade you must scrape a small section in the middle of each of the four edges—in other words you edge-mark the card.

This mark should be no heavier than it absolutely needs to be, and this requirement also applies to the mark you now make in the center of the back of the Queen. These marks should be evident to you without study; you must be able to tell with a glance at the deck where the Queen lies and know instantly when it has been cut to the top.

Replace the Queen of Spades in the deck, which you now stack in any arrangement you prefer; for this routine I find a cyclic stack (Si Stebbins, Eight Kings) better than a memorized deck (such as Nikola). This done, turn the Queen of Spades *face up*, replacing it in the same position, and cut the deck so that the face-up Queen is in about the center of the deck. This is Deck Two.

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We now turn our attention to the case that will hold this deck:



Put fifty-two of the unused cards into the case. Place it on the table with the flap side up and away from you. In the lower right corner of the case cut a small window, just large enough to reveal the index of the bottom card of the deck.

Now take any odd card and glue it squared in alignment to the case, the glue being applied *on the upper half only*. The lower part, which conceals the window, is left free, but the natural tension of the card keeps it firmly against the case.

To increase this natural tension you now glue another card over the first, fastening the two cards together over their *full surface*.

In appearance the two cases should now be identical.

(Note: If, as mentioned before, the case as purchased *already* has a card glued to it, loosen the lower half of this card by sliding another card between it and the case; lift the card just enough to cut the window; and then glue another card on top of it as described.)

Remove the 'dummy' cards you put into the case during construction and place Deck Two in the prepared case. Deck Two is now complete.

Write *Queen of Spades* on the index card and fold it once each way, and the preparation is finished.

Into one side jacket pocket place Deck One, along with the folded index card bearing the prediction; Deck Two goes in the opposite pocket.

If you are doing this routine for more than one person and thus have the opportunity to make a choice, try to pick someone who seems cooperative and—more important—responsive and enthusiastic. If you can find such a person it will make the first test of the routine go more smoothly.

PERFORMANCE

Deck One and the index card are removed from the pocket; the index card is given to the spectator, who is requested to put it away in pocket or purse without looking at it for the moment.

Test No. One

'If I were to ask you to choose a card...'

The cards are spread in the classic 'choose-a-card' style.

'...you might think I was trying to influence your choice in some way, or might take a particular card because of its position in the spread. Or if I were to spread the cards in front of you...'

Here you ribbon-spread the deck across the table face up; run your hand fairly rapidly along the spread.

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...you might decide on a card because of its color or number, or some other psychological appeal.

As you say the sentence above you gather up the cards, square them and turn them face down. Since you are talking to the spectator, your hand is moving along the spread, and the cards are only in view for two or three seconds, the duplicates will not be noticed.

"Therefore I want to leave the selection entirely to chance. Take the deck in your own hands and give it a good shuffle."

Let the spectator shuffle as thoroughly as he wants to, but do not let him linger over this task.

"Fine. Now square them and give them one good straight cut."

You demonstrate the motion with your hands. It is important that you use the phrase *"one good straight cut"*, because if you tell the spectator to give the deck several cuts he may do some sort of running cut; that wouldn't matter here but it *will* matter in Test No. Two.

"Fine. Another cut."

You do this to make sure he will do it right, and are turning your back as he completes the cut.

"And just one more cut. Fine. Now turn the top card face up. Look at it; remember it. Do you have it firmly in mind? Excellent."

"Now—keep the card face up and push it right into the very center of the deck. Square up the cards. Slide the deck into the case on the table; keep it face down."

(You have placed the case on the table with the flap side nearest the table surface; by the foregoing directions you insure that the deck will be properly oriented in the case.)

"Close the flap and tuck it in. Have you done that? Fine."

You turn around to face the spectator.

At this point, of course, what you are going to do is 'pump' the spectator to determine which of the ten cards he's thinking of.

Before I describe the technique, a few observations:

Multiple-bank decks used in pumping are hardly new; though often (and mistakenly) called 'Koran' decks—possibly because one such was marketed under Al Koran's name both singly and as part of his Direct Mind Control routine—the basic idea goes back at least as far as Edward Bagshawe in 1924.

Most such decks now available consist of six cards repeated nine times. There are two basic problems with such decks; first, six cards are really too few to make a convincing display when the faces are shown—and second, what few hints are given on how to pump for the proper card usually consist of simple guesswork, which isn't good enough. Consider what can happen:

IT IS A RED CARD.

No.

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IT'S A SPADE.

No.

IT'S A NUMBER CARD.

No.

By now you would have eliminated down to three cards if you *were using a complete deck*. Clearly there is no advantage to a limited choice deck if it is coupled with a technique that looks to the spectators like guesswork because it is guesswork. Even when you are asking questions, it must look like you are giving information—not acquiring it. That's what makes pumping look different from Twenty Questions.

In the pumping sequence which follows you *do* ask questions—but it doesn't seem like it; and you go by the spectator's *reaction* rather than a verbal response. Essentially what you do is a kind of improvisational acting.

You will learn the basic technique of the pump in a few minutes' study; it will, however, take repeated performances before you learn best how to 'play' it.

Please bear in mind that the technique you are about to learn has fooled several of the world's top card handlers, people who *were familiar with the principle but didn't recognize it*.

You must at this point in the routine adopt a relaxed, confident attitude; don't be in any hurry to pick up the deck. Look at the spectator with a sort of speculative glance. Let your hand rest on the deck on the table and tap it a few times in an absent fashion. After a few seconds you will get a little glimmer in your eyes, as though you are getting a tiny indication of what his thought might be.

Now pick up the deck and touch it lightly to your forehead. Once more, and now you smile slightly, as though the impression you received a few seconds before has just been confirmed. You look at the spectator again with an air of slight amused satisfaction.

"You're not thinking of a red card, are you?"

The inflection of this question is as if you're saying, *"You're not trying to put one over on me, are you?"* With this inflection the question can be taken either way and interpreted as a correct statement on your part.

The spectator will respond with a *yes* or *no*; whichever it is you smile a bit more broadly, for your earlier impression has been confirmed. This 'sells' the idea that you meant the question the way they interpreted it.

IF THE CARD IS RED:

You now say:

"A heart [one-beat pause] or a diamond."

If the spectator responds with a positive reaction when you say *a heart*, of course you stop there; if not you continue after a beat with *or a diamond*. It must seem that you are simply mentioning the two possibilities, so the 'beat'

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between the two statements must be as short as possible; if it is too long the procedure will become obvious.

If the card is a heart:

"Yes... I see it now... a picture... in my mind."

If the spectator responds to the word *picture* go on to name the King of Hearts. If there is no noticeable response this may not be meaningful since some people think of the Jacks, Queens and Kings as *court cards*, and won't immediately associate your use of the word *picture* with these cards. Therefore you continue:

"I am getting the impression of a court card..."

Again, if the response is positive, go on to name the King of Hearts. If not:

"No; it is fading. I see a number of hearts. Think of the number. It appears to be..."

Here you make a vague looping gesture in the air.

"...a six."

If the spectator agrees you have completed the divination; if he does not respond you continue with:

"No; it is like a six, but it is turned around. Oh, of course; you're thinking of the Nine of Hearts."

If the card is a diamond:

You continue on from your divination of the suit with:

"And of low value."

If the spectator responds positively you know he is thinking of the Two, and proceed to reveal it; any other response or hesitation will stem from his wondering if you mean low numerical value or card-game value, and will mean he is thinking of the Ace, which you then reveal.

IF THE CARD IS BLACK:

Here we take a somewhat different approach, going for value first.

"And it isn't an even value, either; it's an odd-value card."

A positive response indicates the Three, Five or Seven; hesitation indicates the Jack or Queen.

(You make the statement in the form indicated above so the phrasing will echo that of the negative cast—as now interpreted—of the question regarding color, making it all seem consistent.)

If a number card:

"A spade... or a club."

As before you pause between the two statements.

If a spade:

"Yes... and I see one, two, three, four, five pips."

If the spectator agrees, you finish with:

"Yes, five—the Five of Spades."

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If he does not respond positively you say:

"But two of those are in the corners; the other three are in a row down the center.... It is the Three of Spades."

If a club:

"A medium value card, yes.... The Seven of Clubs."

If a picture card:

Here you also say:

"A spade... or a club."

By the response you know if it is the Queen of Spades or the Jack of Clubs and conclude the divination accordingly.

When you are doing the suit divinations it sometimes plays better to make a confirming statement if you get no response on the first of the two possibilities, e.g.:

"A heart... or a diamond.... Yes, I think it is a diamond."

I have spoken throughout the foregoing of a 'positive response' on the part of the spectator; lest there be any confusion, I am not talking necessarily about *verbal* response. Only to the first question/statement as regards color do you let him respond aloud; in all other cases you go by his facial reaction (or lack of it) but you do not let him actually speak out. (Note this particularly in regard to the 'odd value' and 'low value' questions; if the spectator is thinking of a court card in the first case or the Ace in the second, you will *always* get a hesitation; when this happens you can immediately continue with the divination without any seeming pause on your part.) Sometimes it is useful to look off into the distance past his shoulder as you make your statements; your peripheral vision will catch his responses and you don't appear to be studying him.

In the *heart* group, the reason you go for the King first—though it is the only court heart and there are two spot hearts—is that if you are wrong an analytical spectator will realize it could still be any of *ten* possibilities; if you did it the other way you'd have narrowed the choices down to three, and the resultant divination would not be as impressive.

In the unlikely event that, presuming the spectator has chosen the Queen of Spades, it is later pointed out to you that the Queen is an *even* value and not *odd* as you stated (in two thousand performances this happened to me exactly three times) you simply say:

"Really? In that case it's amazing that I was still able to pick up the correct thought...."

While in order to cover all the permutations it has been necessary to describe the pumping procedure in somewhat lengthy detail, the actual procedure in the case of one individual card sounds very direct. For example:

"You're not thinking of a red card, are you? A heart.... Yes, I see it now... a picture... the King of Hearts."

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Now that sounds very direct; and while you may think I have chosen a favorable example, in fact all the divinations will play to *the spectator* as being just as straightforward.

Now we must backtrack a bit—because while you have been divining the spectator's thought-of card you have switched Deck One for Deck Two.

How you do this is a matter of your own personal style, but let me indicate some possibilities:

When I used to perform the routine from a standing position, I would simply take the deck—touch it to my forehead—and drop it into the pocket where the other deck lay; this was done with an air of suggesting that the deck was of no importance. At a later point—but before the divination was completed—I would take the deck back out, touch it to my forehead again (!), and toss it on the table.

The reason this action will pass in this context is that the spectators *don't know that you are going to do anything more*, so the deck loses some of its importance.

If you are seated you can use this same procedure, though it does not play quite as well.

Other possibilities might begin with getting Deck Two into your lap: from there you could switch decks in the action of adjusting your chair—you could use a Slydini-like 'lean-back', letting your hand drop into your lap momentarily—you could scoop Deck One from the table into your lap, revealing Deck Two that was previously edge-gripped—you could do a full-deck version of the *Guyatt Exchange*¹—you could do a propelled lapping switch à la Rick Johnsson...²

...if these suggestions aren't sufficient, you'll find a whole chapter of methods in George Sanderson's THE CONCEALED ART OF MAGIC.

The one crucial point regarding the switch is that it not draw any attention to itself; this should be your major consideration in deciding which switch to use.

We will cover those situations where the Queen of Spades happens to be chosen at the conclusion of the basic description; for now we will assume the Queen of Spades has *not* been chosen.

Test No. Two

You're now holding Deck Two; remove it from the case, turn it face up and begin to spread the deck as you talk about the problems of clairvoyance—that while you had another mind to work with in the first test, this test will be more difficult as you'll have only the vibrations of the cards and the psychometric reading of the spectator's touch to guide you.

¹Corinda's THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, page 317.

²See his PRACTICAL IMPOSSIBILITIES, page 43.

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As you talk you spread the cards face up until you come to the reversed card. Take the face-up cards in your right hand away from the rest of the deck and place them on the table, flipping them face down with your fingertips as you do so. Let the face-down card drop from the left hand onto the cards on the table—and finally, turning the left hand palm down, drop the cards it holds onto the rest of the deck. As a trial will show, this appears a very reasonable way of righting the reversed card, and yet there is no danger of showing its face.

It also gives you a chance to show the faces of the cards in a leisurely fashion without making a specific point of it.

You hand the deck back to the spectator and tell him to cut the cards just as he did before. The spectator does this and you turn your back, telling him to cut them again. And once more.

"Now listen carefully—without looking at the top card I want you to take it from the top of the pack—turn the pack face up—and push the card right into the center of the pack—make sure you don't get a look at it."

"Square the cards—and turn the pack face down. Slide it into the card case as you did before, and close the flap. Done? Excellent."

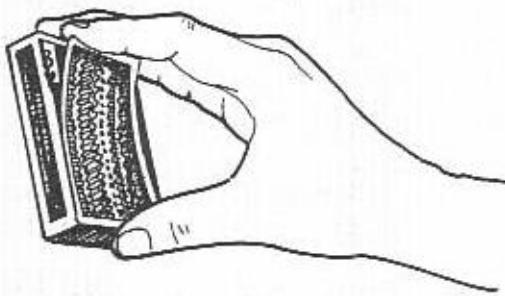
This handling, replicating that in the first test, insures that (a) the deck will be properly placed in the case and (b) the spectator will not inadvertently *look* into the case—though he would be unlikely to notice the window if he did.

(It is important to use the verbiage above exactly as given, in which you first tell the spectator not to look at the card and then tell him what action to take with it. If you began by saying, *"Take the top card..."*, it is quite possible that by the time you said, *"...and without looking at it..."* the spectator would have already looked.)

You turn around and pick up the case; this is done in a particular manner. With the window side *up*, your right hand grasps the deck by the second, third, and fourth fingers at the bottom of the case and the thumb at the top (flap) end; in a manner of speaking you are holding the deck upside-down as you

pick it up. Your right forefinger rests on the corner of the cover-cards just above the window. You touch the deck to your forehead and as your hand comes down from this action the forefinger lifts the corner of the cards just enough for you to spot the index of the bottom card of the deck through the window.

From this you are able to calculate the next card in the stack which is, of course, the reversed card.



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You do not simply announce the name of the card; after all, you've just told the spectator that this is more difficult than the first test. Therefore you pattern your revelation along the lines of what went before, with perhaps a shade more confusion:

'It isn't a red card this time, either. A spade or a club... I think it is a club. A number card.... Even... yes.... The Six... no... the Eight of Clubs.'

You remove the deck from the case and either spread it yourself or hand it to the spectator to check; the reversed card is located and sure enough is the card you named.

(Note: when the card is shown, act a bit pleased and relieved that you are correct. After all, if you were really clairvoyant you would probably not know you were correct until this moment—so play it this way.)

Test No. Three

'Fine; now one last test. Give the deck another shuffle.'

This slight stressing of the word *another* will subtly suggest to the spectator that he has been shuffling the deck every time, instead of just before the first test and this final test.

'It won't be necessary for me to turn my back this time—you'll understand why in a moment.'

At this point look at the deck as the spectator holds it, and locate the Queen of Spades from the edge-marking. It may, in fact, be on top. If it is not, your procedure will vary slightly depending on approximately where it is located.

IF AT ABOUT THE CENTER:

'Give the deck one straight cut.'

This will usually bring the card to the top; if it does not, direct him to cut the deck twice more; this will bring the Queen of Spades back to the center and hopefully this time to the top.

IF ONE-FOURTH FROM THE TOP OR BOTTOM:

Have the spectator riffle shuffle the deck again; this is, you explain—

'To make sure they are really mixed thoroughly.'

This will bring the Queen of Spades to the center; you then proceed as above.

IF A FEW CARDS FROM THE TOP OR BOTTOM:

Have the spectator shuffle again 'to make sure they're mixed'; this should bring the Queen of Spades into one of the positions above, from which you proceed as indicated.

Once the Queen of Spades is in the center of the deck, one or three cuts should bring it to the top; if this doesn't happen, then the stylus work on the card will have to be strengthened.

When the Queen of Spades has been cut to the top—and you will know this by the marking on the back—you direct the spectator to turn over the top card. About half the time the spectator will have forgotten all about the index card;

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when, at your direction, he now takes it out and reads it, the look on his face will form a fitting climax to the routine.



I have specified the Queen of Spades as your prediction since it is entirely possible that it may be chosen in the first or second test of the routine; if this happens it means that you can end the routine right there by having the prediction revealed, and/or at the beginning of Test No. Two you can show the reversed card to be the one it is supposed to be—subtle proof that the deck has not been switched.

If you do not wish to do this and use a card not among those in Deck Two as your prediction, the only stipulation is that it must, of course, be a court card—so the border design will conceal the indentation.

(This is, incidentally, why I specified a design back; a solid color would, at the wrong light angle, reveal the ridge quite clearly.)



If you are familiar with Phil Goldstein's diveswitch³, you may employ it by having an envelope bearing the prediction in your inside coat pocket; the deck to be switched in rests in the outside jacket pocket on the same side. You do not hand out this prediction at the beginning; instead, after the divination in Test No. One has been concluded, you mention you have an envelope which concerns something that may happen later. Deck One is in the hand on the same side as the pocket containing Deck Two; your other hand reaches across your body and opens your jacket, indicating that the spectator should remove the envelope; you may also have to direct this verbally.

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As this is done you have considerable cover to drop the first deck into your pocket and pick up the second, using the Goldstein technique.

Regarding the prediction card:

You may feel a bit uncomfortable about leaving a gaffed card around—even one with a gaff this subtle. Here are a couple of ways around that problem I have used when I thought the situation warranted it:

³Found in his RED BOOK OF MENTALISM, page 17.

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Using the index card prediction—when the prediction was seen to be correct I picked up the Queen of Spades, kissed it as if in relief, and put it face outward into my jacket pocket (handkerchief pocket); this would usually get a laugh or a chuckle, and a few moments later I would remove the card and drop it on the table with the rest of the deck. Actually, of course, I removed a duplicate ungaffed Queen of Spades.

Using the envelope—instead of a written prediction I had a matching Queen of Spades to act as the prediction. After the two cards were shown to match I simply put the gaffed card back (?) into the envelope and left the ordinary Queen with the deck.

As long as I have brought up the subject of switching out a gaff, there may be those who would like to leave an ordinary case on the table. Personally I don't think this is necessary, but if you do there's nothing to stop you from preparing a third case and having it ready to switch in—or figuring some way of getting Deck One out of its case and using *that* case for the switch-in. It really isn't worth the trouble.

Once you thoroughly understand the technique behind the pumping system you will be able to take those extra cards and make decks with different banks of ten. One simple way would be to reverse the colors in relation to the values—e.g., *Six, Nine and King of Spades, Ace and Two of Clubs*, etc.—but there are other approaches. Don't do this until you have mastered (and I mean *mastered*) the system given here—and when you do use variations, remember which deck you're using!

The five-bank deck can, of course, be used on its own—in a stage routine I have sometimes used it as a lead-in to a two-deck coincidence effect (employing a switch) and also in the previously mentioned Koran Direct Mind Control sequence.

Phil Goldstein suggests, as an alternate handling of the third test, that you bring the Queen of Spades to the top of the deck and then guide the spectator through the cut-deeper force. This may be especially useful should things for some reason go awry in the final phase of the basic routine.

CREDITS

Though often connected with the name of Koran, and less frequently with that of Audley Walsh⁴, the multiple-bank deck was described by Edward Bagshawe, as mentioned earlier, in 1924⁵. I have even heard that Hofzinser may have used something of the sort—but, historical reconstructions notwithstanding, very little can be credited to Hofzinser with any certainty.

The particular cards I use had as their nucleus the five-card *Psychorama* group created by the brilliant Gene Grant⁶; to those I added another five and expanded the pumping sequence.

⁴The Magician's Dream in *The Jinx*, No. 43; page 298.

⁵See *A Spirit Divination Mystery* in his EXCLUSIVE PROBLEMS IN MAGIC, page 42.

⁶PHANTINI'S MENTAL KEY, page 15.

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(Interestingly, in his 1980 book, PHANTINI'S INCREDIBLE MENTAL SECRETS⁷, Grant describes a five-bank deck using two groups of five *Psychorama* cards; an ingenious subtlety is used to determine in which group the spectator's card lies.)

Revealing a reversed card in the center of a deck by means of a stack is the invention of Annemann.⁸ It is not known who first thought of combining this with a window case; such cases had up to then been used with the venerable X-Ray Deck.

The particular case described here is, ironically enough, the invention of Al Koran, and may be found in an early *Gen*⁹.

The ridged card here described can be found in Hilliard's GREATER MAGIC¹⁰; Hilliard credits it to Jontay. To the best of my knowledge it has not been used in the manner given here.

⁷Page 36.

⁸See *Dual Sympathy* in his SH-H-H—! IT'S A SECRET, page 28.

⁹A Clear Case of Clairvoyance; Vol. 10, No. 10; Feb. 1955; page 274.

¹⁰Page 479.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

For another application of the pumping sequence used in *Trionic* see:
Hallmark—page 533

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[1981]

IN THE LITERATURE of magic and mentalism are to be found many routines with a 'fortunetelling' premise; I put the word in quotes because most such routines turn out to be card tricks or mental effects with fortunetelling *props*—but with no actual fortunetelling going on.

So let's be clear about what is to follow; these are techniques and procedures to be used in giving an individual spectator a reading. They are based on magical and mental principles but are here specifically applied to the problem of giving an answer to a spectator's unspoken question. What you are going to read is not theory; it is from my own experience on a professional basis as a fortuneteller.

The people for whom I did my readings did not come to see a magical effect, or to have me read their mind. They came because they had a question in their mind and they were searching for an answer. They were serious; and the business of fortunetelling is a very serious profession indeed.

What do I mean by that? Simply this: in nearly all fortunetelling situations the subject tends to *believe* what he or she is being told, regardless of how skeptical the individual may appear to be. There is a certain something in the mystique of fortunetelling that by some means bypasses the critical faculties of even highly intelligent and sophisticated subjects.

Of course there are exceptions—and certainly it is true that no one will take seriously a purported fortunetelling routine that turns out to be a framework for a series of jokes or gags, or something that is quite clearly a card trick (the sort of thing where the subject ends up with four Kings and you tell her she's going to have a marvelous future). There are also a few people who simply have no belief in any kind of fortunetelling or other occult subjects; since they are unlikely to be the focus of a reading they do not concern us here.

It should be noted that—except in the case of the out-and-out comedian or comedy-magician—performers who begin routines in the guise of fortunetelling which rapidly become gags or card tricks will find that such routines tend to fall flat even when they engender a brief laugh.

Why? The obvious answer is that people are more interested in having their fortune told than in seeing a card trick—but it goes far deeper than that. Fortunetelling is serious and very personal; a subject looking forward to this

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kind of experience and getting something different and much less will be fully as insulted as a person who in good faith goes on stage to assist a magician and has an egg broken on his hand through a bottomless glass.

This means that you cannot approach a fortunetelling routine as you might a card trick; this is not an area for dabblers or dilettantes. People are going to believe what you tell them if you do a good job—and I presume you don't want to do a *bad* job.

That brings us to a key point; *responsibility*. You have to realize that your subject is looking to you for help, and is likely to act on what you say to a greater or lesser degree—and you must therefore be responsible for what you say. In *Step Eleven* of his THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM Tony Corinda points out that "*you are dealing with peoples' lives, not a dead pack of playing cards*"—and to the degree you interact with them you have to accept credit or blame for what happens.

At this point some of you may be thinking, "*Hey, wait a minute, this is all getting pretty heavy. All I want to do is entertain people, give them a few laughs, amuse them—maybe mystify them. I don't want to get involved in their lives.*"

That is a perfectly acceptable point of view to take—but if that's your viewpoint then *stay away from fortunetelling*; there is no way it can be impersonal, no way you can stay uninvolved. Even a badly delivered stock reading is going to have an effect on the subject—and what happens subsequently will to some degree be your responsibility.

Do understand that fortunetelling is not primarily a medium of entertainment, though often sold as such. Done with a sense of ethics and concern, it is basically a mixture of counseling and social work draped on a framework of mysticism. For this, you need a background and training in subjects more intricate than double lifts and billet switching—and if you are not willing to devote the necessary time to acquiring the requisite knowledge it will be better for you (and for your potential customers) if you focus your energies on less hazardous areas of mystery.

It may seem strange that I lay so much stress on ethics in a discussion of fortunetelling—particularly as many magicians look down on it as some sort of sleazy con game on a level with fake mediums. Indeed, the famed Magic Castle does not permit fortunetelling to be done on a formal basis (somewhat ironic in view of the fact that William Larsen, Sr. created and often performed several of the very finest fortunetelling sequences).

Well—sometimes fortunetelling is a con game, a racket; but this can be true in any area of endeavor. I have even heard of people who collect a few items of magical apparatus and then, without any kind of formal training or experience, hire out as professional magicians...!

It is also said that fortunetellers should not deal with the real life problems of their subjects, that such things are better left to ministers, social workers,

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psychologists or psychiatrists. In response to that it might be said that if such professionals did their job there might not be any need for fortunetellers—but the real answers are somewhat more complex than that:

For one thing, no particular 'school' of psychotherapy, including psychoanalysis, has ever been shown to have *any statistical validity whatsoever*. Individual therapists have achieved consistent good results with their clients, but in no way is this connected with the belief-system they use, be it Jungian, Freudian, behaviorist, Rogerian—whatever. The Rorschach test, widely used in clinical and private practice for half a century, likewise has failed to produce any evidence that it works! The point here is that there is no reason to suppose that Rorschach cards or Luscher Color cards are in any way more 'valid' than Tarot cards. When you are trying to help someone it is *you* that's important, not the tools you choose to employ.

A related thesis is that fortunetellers are supposedly not quite as 'respectable' as professional mental health workers—and perhaps, from the standpoint of the upper middle class, this may sometimes be true. From an *economic* standpoint, however, the situation is less clear; while an unethical fortuneteller might 'case' a client (keep the client returning for larger fees) and eventually obtain several hundred dollars, a psychoanalyst might well have a person as a client for several years, at thousands of dollars per year—and, as indicated above, the doctor would find it very difficult to prove he or she had benefited the clients to any greater degree than a reader/advisor, though costing them a helluva lot more.

Of course there are rotten apples in fortunetelling, because there are rotten apples everywhere and fortunetelling is not an exception to that rule. There are bad policemen, but being a policeman is not a bad thing; the same is true of most other professions—including fortunetelling.

Most importantly, however—and here again I must stress that I am speaking from direct experience—many, perhaps most of the people who come to fortunetellers *would not go to a psychologist or psychiatrist*, not only because they can't afford the rates, but because to them it would seem as though they were admitting being 'crazy in the head'. Also, the only place they are likely to have encountered psychotherapy is in a hospital or clinic setting, hardly an ideal experience. If they have a minister, there are a number of problems they simply are unable to discuss with him or her—and if they're in an economic class where they encounter social workers, often the social worker is far too overworked to help *or* there might be a conflict of interest.

That, in a very compressed nutshell, is why your clients don't go to the above-named sources for help; but why, particularly, do they come to you?

The basic appeal—and *raison d'être*—of fortunetelling (as indeed of question-answering mental acts) lies in the thesis that you prove you have mystical powers by discerning the client's unspoken question; therefore the answer

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you give to the question, presumably employing those same mystical powers, has a greater value than would be the case if you gave exactly the same response in the *persona* of a counselor or therapist.

Here we have another important point: because you are presumed to have knowledge beyond the ordinary, your clients are not only going to believe you—they are going to act on what you say to a much greater degree than they would the same advice given by an 'ordinary mortal'. Your responsibility to your clients, therefore, is correspondingly greater.

One more thing; it may be said that since you might use some subterfuges and deception in your work—a secret peek at a written question, for example—you cannot possibly be operating ethically since you are deceiving the client as to what is actually happening. Also it may be remarked that the use of Tarot cards, astrology, palmistry, etc., is just preying on the superstitious nature of your client.

To answer these objections we may point out that physicians use placebos (sugar pills) to calm those who think they need a wonder drug, and other examples of 'approved' use of deception could be given. As far as Tarot cards, etc., are concerned—it is by no means certain that such systems of divination are valueless; indeed, it would be difficult to show them to be less valid than the aforementioned Rorschach blots.

I have gone over these ethical concerns at some length to try to demonstrate some of the fallacies that lie in objections to fortunetelling. What it comes down to, finally, is your intent: if you want to rip people off, exploit them, endanger them for your personal gain, you can probably do that with fortunetelling...

...but if you want to do some good for some people, help those who perhaps couldn't (or wouldn't) be helped by anyone else, save some of your clients from a good deal of sorrow and pain, perhaps even save a life here and there...

...you *can do that* with fortunetelling. Something to think about, isn't it?

INTERLUDE

I made mention earlier of how fortunetelling seems to bypass the critical faculties. To illustrate, this brief anecdote:

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A few years ago I attended a party; among the guests were a number of professors and other teachers and instructors from various west coast universities. Also in attendance was a well-known magician who enjoyed a worldwide reputation for his abilities as a fine close-up performer. His effects met with an interested and appreciative audience—but when one of the professors mentioned having made a study of palmistry he was immediately besieged by almost everyone at the party. As the professor gave a few readings his subjects hung on his every word.

If this was the reaction of a group of people who were better educated, more skeptical and indeed more intelligent than the average, we can safely assume

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that the usual subject of a fortunetelling reading is going to take it very seriously indeed.

A PRO'S VIEW

Some years ago I met a master 'scope worker'; though he was in his late sixties then, he may still be alive and active—and therefore I will only identify him by his initials: DD.

Most of DD's work was done in dime stores, but it was unlike a usual pitch in that he did not seek to build a large 'tip', or group of potential customers. Instead, his method was to do continuous readings, using the center tear; the reading was 'free' but to get it the customer had to buy a Sun-sign horoscope and Solar Zodiac tick-sheet (then available from their publisher, Nelson Enterprises). Though his technique was specifically geared to the dime-store situation, there are points in his work which any reader or fortuneteller can study with profit.

For his center-tear DD used a six-inch square of cheap yellow paper; a three-inch square box in the center was surrounded with words like *love, money, health, travel, children*—possible subjects for questions.

His center-tear, executed at a brisk pace, was done without any careful lining-up of the pieces, and *without looking at his hands*. He was not doing a paper-tearing trick but reading a mind, and the paper had served its purpose as an 'aid to concentration'—the pieces of paper were now simply garbage with no further importance or need for attention.

On completing the tear DD handed the pieces—minus the center, of course—to the client and asked her to drop them into the vase. This vase had a narrow neck, and therefore the pieces once dropped in were safe from prying eyes or hands. By the time the client's attention had returned to him DD had opened the center below the counter-top; he proceeded with the reading, marking off characteristics on the ticking-sheet as he did so.

In his private-reading work DD used similar techniques, except that often he would have the client write *two* question-slips and fold them together. After the tear had been executed and while the client was depositing the fragments on a napkin DD would walk to a table behind her to get a ticking-chart; during this journey he would read the two centers and give them some additional tears. In wrapping up the pieces in the napkin these pieces were added; later he might do a graphology bit using one of the fragments with writing, or just have the client take it home with her.

Now for an angle which, before my original article on DD which appeared in *Magick*¹, had never been in print. To his 'store' clients and many others DD gave business cards; often he would receive phone calls from those who wanted private readings. I was present when one of those phone calls came in. 'Who is this?' asked DD. 'Miss Johansen? Ah, yes, my dear, I seem to get a

¹No. 167; Nov. 26, 1976; page 836.

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vibration from you—concentrate on your first name if you would... "As he talked DD opened one of several small card files; within, arranged alphabetically, by name, were all the centers for the past week. There were two Johansens; DD pumped for the correct one and proceeded to tell the lady her birthdate. I could hear the gasp coming from the other end of the phone line. Imaginative readers will be quick to grasp the possibilities of this system.

APPROACH

Let's begin our discussion of specific technique with the setting of the reading. For all practical purposes this divides into two areas of concern: those situations where you have control over what the setting will be like—your home, a private office, a 'psychic fair' where you can set up your own enclosed booth—and those situations where you're pretty much at the mercy of the person who has arranged for your appearance—parties, dinners, some (but not all) restaurant situations. Obviously the first kind is better—let's see what we can do with it, and how we can adapt some of these concepts to less ideal situations.

The setting begins with the props you choose to use; your selection of these in turn is determined by the kind of fortuneteller you choose to be. However—whether you use Tarot cards, a regular deck, astrology, palmistry or tea-leaf reading—it is most important to have some interesting and intriguing object to use within the reading process. It gives the clients something to look at, a place for them to focus their attention while you focus your attention on *them*. Too, the use of some kind of device in the reading process seems to make it more real, more legitimate, not just 'all talk'; here you are specifically not working as a psychic as such, who might not be expected to use any props, but as a fortuneteller. People get their ideas of how a fortuneteller should look from films and television, and in this particular area of mystery it is best to go along with their preconceptions.

This brings us, for the moment, to another point—your dress. Obviously this will be a matter of personal taste to some degree, but do remember that you are supposed to be something more than an ordinary mortal, perhaps even a bit weird (!), and therefore a bit of theatrical flamboyance is not only acceptable but appropriate.

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On the other hand, a fortuneteller is generally imagined to be somewhere between a psychic and a performer—so, unless you can carry it, don't step over the line into something that is obviously a costume. Let's put it this way; if you're in a group of people and someone is told there's a fortuneteller in the group they should realize you're the one...!

The only major requirement of your surroundings is that they provide at least a degree of privacy. While this is not essential—indeed, in one tea-room where I worked the tables were so close together that a client heard not only her own reading but that of half-a-dozen other people—it is by far the preferable situation for any serious work. (Later in this section I will show how to

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deal with a group of people.) I have made a point of insisting on privacy in doing readings at private parties, and have never lost an engagement because of it; indeed, I think my seriousness on this point (and I am quite serious about it) has impressed the prospective booker.

Atmosphere is important in setting the scene, both literally and figuratively. Literally—a bit of incense in a strange and ornate burner (but not too much; you don't want to drive your client to seek fresh air). Figuratively—as with your clothing, a touch of the mystical. In your own home you can go all out, either throughout the house or in a room or curtained alcove: occult prints, figurines, books and strange hangings. In a booth or similar venue you are, of course, somewhat more limited, but even here as simple a thing as the table-covering can add to the effect you are trying to create; perhaps a red-silk-shrouded lamp or a flickering candle.

All of this, while it may seem obvious, is not unimportant; what you are trying to do is give the client a feeling that she or he is in a strange world where the impossible might happen—*your* world, a world you know and through which you will guide them. On a practical level, if you can successfully create this effect in the mind of your client it can cut skeptical resistance—and your problems—in half.

Professional fortunetellers usually come to their profession by one of two paths: for most of them it is a family business in some way or other, and a few come from the ranks of magic and mentalism. I've noticed one mistake made consistently by this latter group, possibly a carry-over from their performance work: they talk too much.

Now—if you have gone to all the trouble of learning a good stock reading, and further developed the technique of inserting little specific-situation paragraphs into it as required, it can be very annoying if the client keeps interrupting you to tell you a problem; that's life. It is well to remember that most of the people who go to fortunetellers are there to talk as much or more than to listen. Often all they want or need is the friendly ear of someone who seems to care about them...

...which is why I went into that long song-and-dance regarding responsibility; you may be there to make a living, yes, but you should also be there because you *do* care about them.

A great deal of ingenuity has been expended on ways of finding out what question is in a client's mind; you will, in the latter part of this section, learn some interesting and believable ways of discerning a client's thought. It must be understood, however, that this aspect of fortunetelling work is *secondary*—it is, as I have indicated earlier, only the convincer that assures the client of your abilities. Once that purpose has been served, further mystification for its own sake is pointless.

Indeed you will find that—if you're good—you get a considerable percentage of your business in repeaters; these people are by definition certain of

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your abilities, and will for the most part prefer to ask you questions verbally and directly.

Incidentally—this problem of 'repeat business' is one that is rarely touched on in manuscripts pitching the idea of stock readings; obviously, if you have only one set reading that bears no specific relation to the person you're working with, you will be in a bit of trouble when they come to you again and want to hear something new.

Stock readings and set patter lines may work in places like carnivals or psychic fairs—places where you have never worked for a specific client before and are unlikely to see him or her again—but if you are in a fixed location stock readings are not really practical. This is quite aside from the fact that they have zero information content and are unlikely to help your client or give you any feeling of accomplishment.

Moreover—contrary to what you may have read elsewhere—clients who patronize the same reader are likely to discuss what they've been told with each other, often in considerable detail; stock readings will quickly become evident, and you will have lost two or more clients—deservedly so. The making of a fortuneteller's career is largely by word-of-mouth publicity from favorably impressed clients; that career can be rapidly unmade in just the same way.

On the basis of the above comment you will hardly be surprised to learn that I don't recommend any of the currently available stock readings, even the two that are based on the vaunted Forer personality profile. It is no more ethical, practical or acceptable to use preprogrammed verbiage in a framework of fortunetelling than it would be for a psychiatrist, a minister or any other such counselor to do so. Some such professionals do—but they are no credit to their profession; I presume you would like to be a credit to yours.

Similarly, much of what has been written within the field of mentalism on how to classify people and gain information from their appearance is hopelessly outdated; many of these books were excellent for their time—but that time was anywhere from forty to sixty years ago. Much has changed. On the media level we have television, which in the past several decades has brought at least a veneer of sophistication to even the smallest towns and villages, bringing in turn at least a surface skepticism. There have been massive social changes; if you assume that a client talking about a romantic problem is referring to the opposite sex, in a significant percentage of such cases you will be wrong.

Phil Goldstein has discussed this point in the Bonus Insert of *Magick*, No. 181²; prior to that article the subject received virtually no attention.

Many books on the technique of fortunetelling—even some current ones—recommend that you read books on body language and 'psychological motivation'; while this won't do you any harm, it is well to remember two things:

²Page 905.

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much of what is contained in such books is not proven, and the little bit that is proven is valid only in a statistical sense (i.e., while it may be true for most people—or that mythical creature, the 'average person'—there's no way of telling that it's true for the client sitting across the table from you).

It is true that you can sometimes acquire information from physical evidence which has a high degree of probable accuracy. (I wrote a book several years ago—*PSYCHOLOGISTICS*—which had a chapter dealing with precisely this technique for gaining information; related techniques will be described here in the *PSYCHOMETRY* section immediately following.) Your best source for information on such techniques will be found in the crime/criminology section of your library or bookstore; criminalistics, crime-scene examination and investigative procedures will provide you with some useful hints on how to learn about your client in subtle ways.

You will find such books to be far more valuable to you than most character-reading tomes constructed along psychological lines; the information you can acquire from use of investigative techniques is far 'harder' than that of personality analysis. If you tell someone they're trustworthy, loyal, helpful, courteous and kind, it's one thing—but if you tell them they've just moved into a new house and recently lived in a coastal town, that's quite another. Study and practice of the techniques and thought-processes of the investigator will make such things possible for you; certainly it won't be easy, but what that's worthwhile is?

LeNORMAND'S LEGACY

This routine is a slightly altered version of the original, which I have been doing for over thirty years and which appeared in *Genii*³.

I'll describe first the version I now use—with the Tarot cards—and later give some notes on impromptu use with a regular pack.

A Rider-Waite Tarot pack is used; you'll also need some blank-faced cards of the same stock (these are available in many occult shops). These blanks are trimmed at the corners to make them into key cards; only one such card is used in each performance of the routine.

You show the deck and remove the blank-faced card; the client is asked to think of a question and jot down on the card a word or phrase to symbolize it for concentration purposes.⁴

When this has been done the client is asked to insert the card face *down* anywhere in the face-up pack. You talk a bit now about the properties of the Tarot, and as you do you casually give the pack a number of tabled cuts; these are perfectly legitimate. Eventually you pick up the deck of cards and turn it face down. *Important:* you do not look at the cards or appear to take any notice of them whatsoever.

Your right thumb, at the rear of the pack, locates the corner-shorted question card; you release four cards on top of it by

³Vol. 28, No. 1; Sept-Oct. 1963; page 23.

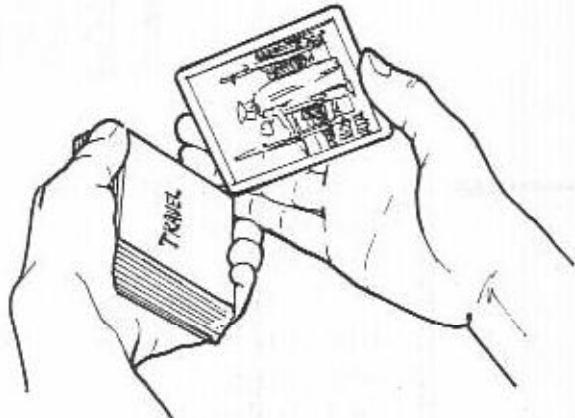
⁴This 'word or phrase' angle is George Anderson's. See his *IT MUST BE MINDREADING*, page 5.

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thumb-counting and cut the pack at this point. Complete the cut. The question card is now fifth from the top of the pack, face up.

You explain that you will do what's known as the Triad reading; three cards only, representing *Past*, *Present* and the *Future*. Deal one card from the top of the pack and turn it face up as you place it on the table; this card, you say, is the *Past*. The next card is dealt face up a few inches to the right, and you explain it symbolizes the *Present*.

Your right hand returns to the pack and prepares for a double lift. *"Now this last card represents the future..."* As you say this you double lift and tilt the inner end of the two cards upward, holding them as one and turning the underside of the double card toward you; the outer end of the deck is raised a bit, tipping the top of the deck toward you. The action is that of opening a book, the front end of the pack being the 'spine'. Apparently you now glance at the face of the card you have lifted slightly from the pack; actually, of course, you glimpse what the client has written.



"...but," you continue, *"I'm not going to let you see that just yet."* The cards are replaced as one on the pack as you pause for a moment. *"Let's deal with the past and present first."*

The top card is dealt face down between and slightly to the rear of the other two cards to form a triangle.

(Two points: first—the Rider-Waite pack does not have white borders, so in all dealing it is critical to keep the deck squared; second—in dealing the *Future* card to the table you may wish to glimpse it, because if it happens to be a card of bad omen or unpleasant appearance you want a little time to figure out how to justify it.)

The pack is now casually cut, the cut is completed and the left hand sets it aside—turning the pack face up as this is done.

You now have the information needed and can go through the reading in whatever manner suits you.

With regular playing cards this is an excellent impromptu routine; have the client use one of the Fours, which have a large area of white space in the center. You could, of course, bend and break the corner of the card to make it a key as in the Tarot routine, but there are so many single-card controls available that this is hardly necessary. If you can locate a white-bordered Tarot deck you like, the handling will be much less critical than with the Rider-Waite.

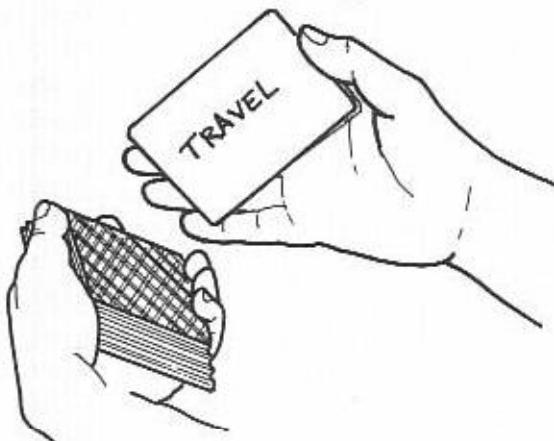
LeNORMAND'S LEGACY II

There are those who, for one reason or another, may find it difficult to keep the cards perfectly aligned—which, in the Tarot version, is essential. Here is an alternate handling:

The client, after writing the question phrase on the face of the blank card, is asked to initial it on the *back*; she then puts this question card anywhere in the pack, inserting the card face *down* in the face-down pack.

You locate the short corner on recovering the pack, and let four cards drop on top of this question card; the pack is cut at this point, bringing the q-card to fifth from the top.

The two cards for past and present are dealt out as in the original routine. You now obtain a break below the question card (easy because of the short corner) and—telling the spectator you won't show her the *Future* card quite yet—lift all three cards as one and tilt them toward yourself; the action is



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similar to that in the original routine. Here, however, you are now looking at the face of the question card (lowermost of the three held as one) and the top of the pack need not be tilted, as here it is innocent. In doing this action tilt the card(s) up with a quick motion so they are flat on to the spectator—so that the triple thickness cannot be discerned—and replace them in the same way; a brief glance is all that is needed, and it should seem as though you were simply toying with the cards to illustrate a point and attached no importance to your actions.

The three cards, still held as one, are replaced on the pack, and then the top card is dealt singly face down to the table. The card now on top of the pack conceals the initialed back of the question card and all seems fair.

As before, you cut the pack idly (putting the question card somewhere in the center of the deck) and set it aside as you proceed with the reading.

MUTAROT

I mentioned earlier that I would give you a method for dealing with a group of people. Usually the situation that occurs is that you're at a party or some such place and the word has gone around that you're a fortuneteller; suddenly you find half-a-dozen people around you, all wanting readings.

What do you do?

Well—you could give them each an individual reading, if you could manage to find someplace reasonably private and had no objection to missing the rest of the party. At the opposite extreme you could say, *"Hey, this is what I do for a living—it's my job—and I am not going to do it for free..."*

The alternative that here follows is better, I think, than either of the two extremes; it satisfies all those who want a reading by giving them a small sampling of your wares—it intrigues others at the party who happen to watch—it can be done with all your would-be 'clients' at one time—it doesn't run more than ten minutes from start to finish, even at a very leisurely pace—and it is really quite simple.

You remove from your Tarot pack the twenty-two cards of the Greater Arcana; the rest of the pack is set aside. From the twenty-two cards you remove two more and set them to one side, face up: *Death* and *The Hanged Man*. These two ominous gentlemen, you explain, will be your informants.

Several of the people involved can now shuffle the twenty-card packet; when this has been done you deal the cards into ten pairs, face down on the table.

Turning your back, you ask each person who wishes a 'reading' to pick up a pair of cards, remember them both, and replace them on the table. When this has been done you turn around and gather up the pairs, shuffle the packet, and deal it into four face-up rows of five cards each.

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Now your two 'informer' cards come into play; handing them to one of the people taking part, you ask her to place them next to the rows in which her thought-of cards appear (*note: "thought-of", not "chosen"*). This is done and you proceed to do a brief reading, in the course of which you very clearly identify the two cards in the person's mind. The process is repeated with everyone who chose pairs.

You will hardly need me telling you that what you are actually doing is one of the oldest card tricks in print—usually called either *Mutus-Nomen-Dedit-Cocis* or *The Pairs Re-Paired*. There are dozens of versions in print; in Hilliard's GREATER MAGIC the better part of a chapter was devoted to this trick alone. Martin Gardner discusses it in MATHEMATICS, MAGIC AND MYSTERY; it can be found in Hugard's ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARD TRICKS and many other places.

The particular version I use is based on the methodology devised by Stewart Judah; it appeared in the *New Phoenix*⁵ and his THE MAGIC WORLD OF STEWART JUDAH⁶. Among its several advantages are that it can be done virtually impromptu and uses what is apparently a very straightforward procedure. I refer you to the primary sources for niceties of handling, but the basic procedure is as follows:

After the pairs have been gathered up in any order you deal them into two piles, saying that you want to insure that the pairs are separated. The pile containing the card first dealt is now placed on top of the other pile and then the twenty-card packet is picked up and held in position for an overhand shuffle.

You run three cards singly into your other hand, and drop the rest of the packet on top. You run two more, and drop the rest of the cards on top as before. This procedure is repeated, so that you have run three, then two, then three, then two in all.

The cards are now dealt into a vertical row of four, top to bottom; a second row is dealt beside the first; you continue until all cards have been dealt in a square of five vertical rows by four horizontal ones.

You now have only to visualize four words as having their letters superimposed on the cards at those positions, as shown in the diagram on the facing page.

With this in mind, when the spectator indicates which horizontal rows contain his choices, you note what letter is common to those rows; the cards at those positions are the two thought-of selections.

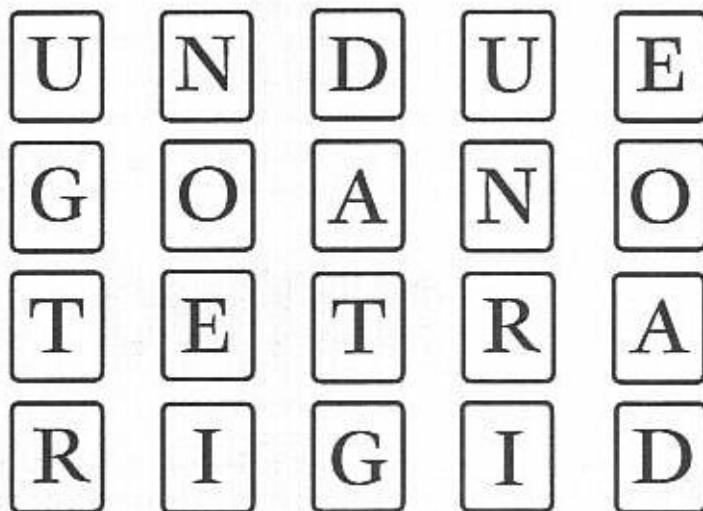
For example: The first and third rows are indicated; the letter common to those two rows is E; you therefore know the spectator is thinking of the last card in the first row and the second card in the third row.

If both cards of the pair are indicated to be in the same row, obviously their positions are symbolized by the two identical letters in that row.

⁵No. 319; page 82.

⁶Page 24.

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In my own handling I have made one alteration to the Judah method; as I pick up successive pairs I spread them slightly, so that one card goes on *top* of those already in the hand, the other card to the *bottom* of the packet. This is done openly. When all the pairs have been thus gathered, I immediately go into the overhand shuffle, first running ten cards and throwing the rest on top; then continuing with the three-two-three-two pattern.

This eliminates that preliminary step of dealing the cards into two piles—which does not always play as logical—and makes the shuffle more convincing as well.

The effect requires the use of twenty cards; by using the Greater Arcana of the Tarot, and having two cards from that group used as Indicators, you work with precisely that number. The two cards used—*Death* and *The Hanged Man*—are thus out of play and cannot be chosen by anyone taking part; this way you won't inadvertently frighten anyone or have to explain that the cards don't always mean what they seem to at first glance...

...obviously you keep the readings light and deliver them briskly; while this routine has its card-trick aspects fairly well-disguised, it is still primarily an entertainment sequence rather than a serious fortunetelling situation.

For all that, you *will* find it useful in creating interest in your fortunetelling work, so keep it in mind when the right kind of situation occurs.

It should be noted that you can do a Charlier shuffle before doing the overhand; the only point to observe is that you push off *even numbers* of cards so that you do not split pairs.

Phil Goldstein has come up with a variant handling of this routine in which all twenty-two cards of the Greater Arcana are available for selection; you'll find it in his book *SILENTWE* (see *Nomen Omen*).

Since I have described the Judah method as used with Tarot cards, I will now describe a routine in which cards as such are not used at all.

MUTWO

This routine is best done with index cards, which makes the handling easier, but in a pinch it could be done with sheets from a three-by-five-inch pad. In the description to follow I will assume that index cards are being used.

Ten index cards are needed; on getting the packet, fold it in half and straighten it out again, so that each card has a crease down the middle.

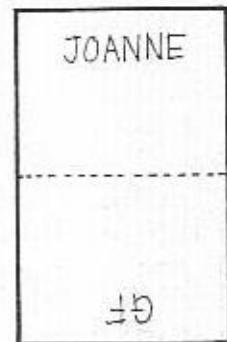
The cards are passed out to ten spectators (or 'sitters'); they are asked to *print* their initials on one half of the card, turn it around (same surface facing them) and on the other half they are to *print* a word or phrase to symbolize a question. You specify printing, you say, so that later you will not inadvertently get a clue from handwriting.

Any spectator then gathers the cards and mixes them as thoroughly as he or she desires.

You now take the packet of ten and *rip it in half*; either half is placed on top of the other and the three-two-three-two shuffle and subsequent deal-out is done.

(Note: Before you tear the packet in half, reverse about half the cards end for end, in the sense that you would reverse a card in a one-way pack or stripper deck. If you did not do this, all the initials would appear in one half of the layout and this might seem to even the most ingenuous a less than random pattern.)

You now ask the spectators in turn to pick up from the layout the half-card bearing their initials; as soon as they do you look for the half in the position where you visualize the



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matching letter. If, for example, the spectator picks up the middle card in the top row, you know that is the D in UNDUE—and the only other D is at the bottom right in the layout, at the end of RIGID.

Presentations may vary; you could have them hold the half-card in their clenched fist and do the divination as you hold their wrist—you could wrap a gold chain around their hand and hold the other end to your forehead—and so forth.

You will also find this routine useful when you are asked if you can tell a person's zodiac sign by looking at them; obviously, they write their initials on one half of the card and their birthdate on the other. Here you can engage in some interesting by-play—if there are two cards that have dates in the same sign of the zodiac (as there almost certainly will be), you divine the correct sign but are unsure of the date: *'I know you're a Pisces, but I'm not sure if you're February twenty-third or March fourth; I'd have to guess March fourth—is that it?'*

INDEXRAY

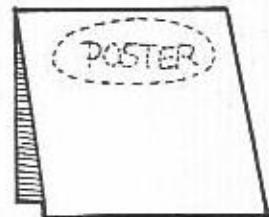
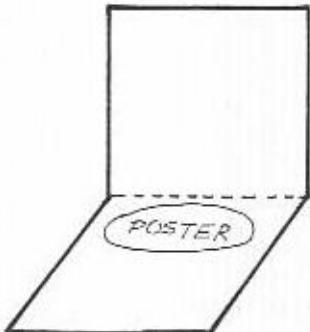
Take an index card (unlined) and fold it in half; now open it half-way—so that the halves are at a ninety-degree angle—and rest it on the table so that one half lies flat and the other half sticks up in front, acting as a screen to conceal what you might write from someone sitting across from you.

Draw an oval on the upper half of the flat section; the upper edge of the oval is at the fold line and the lower half is midway between the fold line and the edge of the card nearest you. Use a marking pen to do this.

Push the card and marking pen across the table to the client; tell her to write in the oval a word that symbolizes her question (as in the card routine earlier). This done, she is to bring the projecting half down flat, folding the card in half as it was at the beginning. You instruct her to turn the folded card over and put her initials right in the center.

This done, ask her to fold the card in half again, the initials *inside*, and hand it to you.

You proceed with the reading, holding the card at your fingertips; at one point you say, *"I want you to concentrate; look at your initials."* You hold the card toward her and open one fold so the initials are visible to her—and as she sees the initials *you see the word*, properly oriented for reading through the single index card thickness. You have made a point of having a lamp or other light source set to shine in your direction.



OMNIMANCY

This opening of the card is done with both hands, and your thumbs at the rear of the card press down to make it as flat as possible, once the fold is opened; this will make the word stand out more clearly.

Getting the word should take no more than the briefest of glances; often you can get it in the act of opening the fold. The instant you have the word you turn your head away—it should seem to the client that you had turned your head away *before* anything was done with the card.

When she has looked at the initials for a moment you may comment that indeed the image is getting clearer (!). Crumple the card in your hand, place it in hers and close her fingers over it. Continue with the reading and answer the question.

At the conclusion of the reading you might want to get the card back, because if the client plays with it she may discover that it is possible to make out the word through the folded card. Obviously you don't want to make a grab for it that would excite suspicion; you'll have to put some logic into the proceedings.

Here are a couple of possibilities:

As you give the reading with the folded card in her closed hand, you hold her hand in both of yours—ostensibly to sense the vibrations. At the finish you open her hand and take the card, commenting that her problem or question is something only between the two of you; you light it in the flame of a convenient candle and drop it into a brazier or copper bowl—and by what you say imply that you are burning the card *for her protection and privacy*—which you are; and yours too.

Or:

Take the card from her at the end of the reading as if curious, saying under your breath, *"What did you write?"* You open the card—squint at the word as though having a bit of difficulty making it out—finally you 'decipher' what it is and give a little smile or laugh, along with a shake of the head...as if to say, *"Amazing I was able to receive the thought if that's what you were concentrating on..."* Do not, of course, say any such thing *aloud*.

The card having now satisfied your curiosity, you tear it up and drop it in the ashtray as being of no further importance.

Clearly to bring off this latter ploy you have to be something of an actor; the purpose it serves—aside from getting the card back—is to hammer down the idea that only now for the first time do you know what the client actually wrote. Done correctly, this little bit of acting will accomplish just that.

PALMISTIC

This final routine is built around the premise of palmistry; in it, without asking any questions or having anything written down, you are able to determine whether a client's question concerns the present or the future, and also its general subject matter.

This is done by means of an adaptation of two techniques allied with—but not identical to—contact mindreading, sometimes referred to as muscle reading. In view of that, you will hardly be surprised to learn that these procedures don't work one hundred percent of the time—but with practice they work better than ninety percent of the time, which is good enough for our purposes.

You begin by taking the client's hands in yours; your right hand encircles her left wrist—thumb resting lightly above the pulse—and your left hand similarly holds her right hand.

You explain that the right hand symbolizes character, the left hand symbolizes fate; in like manner the right hand is the hand of the present time while the left hand is the hand of the future. *'Now,'* you say, *'simply think about your question and whether it concerns the present [here you lift the client's right hand slightly and then lower it] or the future [the same action is done with client's left hand]; concentrate.'*

As you talk your thumbs continue to rest on the pulses in the wrists; you will suddenly feel an alteration in the pulse of one hand—usually a slight speeding or extra beat—and this is the hand being thought of.

Obviously this same technique can be used to determine if the question concerns primarily the client or some other person; a friend or an enemy; business or social; local or distant—anything, in fact, that can be broken down into two possibilities.

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It is best, however, to use only *one* of these two-option sets to begin; you then continue with the following technique.

You have been studying palmistry for some time, you say, and have devised your own system based on the classical methods.

Taking the client's hand in yours, you point to the thumb and explain that it is ruled by *Venus* and concerns *love*; the first finger is *Jupiter*, and concerns *occupation or profession*; the second finger is *Saturn*, and concerns *money matters*; the third (ring) finger is *Apollo*, and concerns *health*; and the little finger is *Mercury*, and concerns *travel*.

"*Think of your question,*" you say, "*and whether it is ruled by the thumb, first, second, third, or little finger—romance, profession, money, health or travel—Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Apollo, Mercury.*" As you named the question categories you pointed to each finger in turn but did not touch it; after a pause, when you repeat the planetary rulers, you touch each finger as you name it. One finger will seem stiffer, offer a bit more resistance than the others; this is the finger—and question category—thought of.

You say you've devised 'your own system' because you don't want someone who has studied a bit of palmistry to disagree with your way of categorizing; if a question should arise despite this, you simply say that this is your system and it seems to work for you. A line I have used in such situations is: "*Oh . . . you must be talking about one of those . . . published systems.*"

NOTES

As with the pulse-reading technique, the finger-touch can be used to discern anything that fits into the number of categories it has to offer.

It would seem reasonable that you could use the finger-touch twice in a reading—once for each hand—as long as you can come up with some sort of presentational logic. If, for example, your pulse-read presentation has dealt with the problem of whether the question concerns the client or some other person, then you might understandably go to the other hand, after determining the basic category of the question, to find out *who* it concerned: parent, child, sibling, lover, friend.

More than this would be pushing it, and almost make it seem to the client that you are trying to play twenty questions—an impression you want to avoid.

CREDITS

The two basic techniques have been around for a long time; William W. Larsen, Sr. wrote up a description of the pulse-read⁷, and Al Baker the five-finger touch⁸, but it is fairly certain that both procedures date back to the turn of the century or earlier.

⁷See THE DR. Q. SIMPLICITY MINDREADING ACT; originally a manuscript published by Thayers, this was later reproduced in THE MENTAL MYSTERIES AND OTHER WRITINGS OF WILLIAM W. LARSEN, SR., page 204.

⁸Flosso's OUR MYSTERIES, page 9.

CODA

In the writing of this section I have fairly consistently referred to the client as being female; this is not through any male-chauvinistic prejudices but because—at least as this is written—the overwhelming majority of fortunetelling clients are in fact female.



It has been pointed out to me that I tend to be somewhat terse in my descriptions; this is no doubt because I feel it is better to say too little than to say too much. I don't go over every little detail because I am assuming you are going to put a good deal of your own thought and ingenuity to putting clothes on the framework I've provided. Actually, you have no choice in the matter; mentalism, particularly in the area of fortunetelling, is intensely personal, and as such an outgrowth of the performer's personality.

This is why there is no such thing as "*self-working mental magic*." There may be "*tricks that look like the real stuff that mentalists do*"—but mentalism, real mentalism, is *the performer, not the effects*.

Therefore—don't be in too much of a hurry to try out what you've read here. Give yourself a chance to absorb it, consider it, make it an expression of yourself.

And remember too what I said at the beginning of this section: fortunetelling, done responsibly, is neither easy nor simple—so if it seems so to you—
—you're doing something wrong.



NOTE 1993: Within the magic community there has lately been a great deal of interest in fortunetelling and giving of readings; I cannot persuade myself that this is at all a good thing. I am thinking particularly of an article in *Genii* by some person who, in magic for a while, had just discovered the joys of mentalism and now, after a couple of months in the field, was giving readings to his unsuspecting public. He sounded very pleased with himself; my blood ran cold.

I discussed this with Stephen Minch, and he suggested a rather horrifying thought-experiment: look around at your next magic or mental club meeting at your associates, and try to decide which of them you would want to have giving advice about life to your spouse or son or daughter...

...as a coda to Stephen's experiment, I would suggest you then go look in a mirror.

Again: fortunetelling is not a scam, not a racket—it is not, finally, even an amusement—it is real life, and it is serious. Treat it seriously—or leave it those who will.

SUGGESTED READINGS

In recent years a number of books on cold reading and related subjects have been published, notably those of Richard Webster, Alexander Thomas, Ron Martin, Savile and Dewey, and Bascom Jones. Here I would like to suggest some more general publications that may be found useful.

PASSAGES: *Predictable Crises Of Adult Life* by Gail Sheehy

This brilliantly written book deals with the problems we all face at various stages of our lives.

WORKING by Studs Terkel

This 'oral history' is a series of interviews with people in all sorts of occupations. Many other books of Terkel's will also be of interest.

THE COSMO REPORT: *Women And Sex In The 80's* by Linda Wolfe

This book, the result of questionnaires and interviews with over 100,000 women, is at present the most definitive presentation of what women *really* think about various aspects of love and sex. It was, however, produced prior to the onset of the AIDS crisis, and should be read with that fact in mind.

THE MIND GAME: *Witchdoctors And Psychiatrists* by E. Fuller Torrey

An interesting examination of various forms of 'official' and 'unofficial' psychotherapy; particularly interesting are the comparisons made in Chapter Seven.

THE ART OF COUNSELING by Rollo May

Essential reading for the ethical and conscientious fortuneteller, this book is invaluable for its suggestions for the one-on-one encounter.

MY SECRET GARDEN

MEN IN LOVE

WOMEN ON TOP, all by Nancy Friday

Dealing with female and male sexual fantasies, these books offer some interesting insights into a subject often uppermost in the minds of those who visit fortunetellers.

CROSS-REFERENCE

Many effects in this collection can be applied to the fortunetelling theme; note, however, that this is not always a good idea. If you are working as a fortuneteller people want to hear about their future, not see a trick with zodiac cards.

That warning given, see:

Double Routine—page 180

Trinkle—page 186

Quintasense—page 279

In2ition—page 446

Tri-Beaut—page 595

PSYCHOMETRY

[1981]

IT IS MORE than a little interesting that in both areas of classical mentalism—question answering and psychometry—the basic *effect* to be achieved is misunderstood by most magicians and many mentalists.

To explain:

If you ask most people in the mystery field to define the question-answering (or QA) act, you will be told that it is the revelation of a question thought of by a spectator. It is not, of course; it is *giving the answer* to a spectator's question, a very different thing indeed.

Proof of this is not difficult to establish. In the 1930's a performer named Gene Dennis did a QA act in which the questions were simply *asked verbally* by members of the audience. No one objected to this procedure and the act was very successful and effective. In recent years another performer who did QA in the same direct manner was the late (and much missed) David Hoy, who was able to create a strong and very convincing effect. Again, the effect lies in giving the answer—not in getting the question.

I mention this because this sort of confusion is even more marked in relation to psychometry. Asked to define *this* effect, the response of most mystery workers is "... objects are sealed in separate envelopes and mixed up, and then the performer tells which object belongs to which spectator."

In fact that is *not* psychometry; it is a fair description of *Pseudo-Psychometry*, the effect popularized (but not invented) by Theo Annemann. It gives a good idea of the way the effect is usually performed—but it is no more psychometry than discerning a question is question-answering.

What is psychometry?

The OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY tells us: *The (alleged) faculty of divining, from physical contact or proximity only, the qualities or properties of an object, or of persons and things that have been in contact with it.*

Day's OCCULT DICTIONARY gives a bit more detail: *In practice the medium is handed an object, such as a wrist watch or ornament worn near the body, and by impinging his or her mind on this, he or she is able to tune in to vibrations emitted by the sitter, which relay information quite unknown... often a psychometrist will give the history of the object...*

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(It should be noted that there is a secondary definition of psychometry, relating to mental measurement in psychology, which does not concern us here.)

Without, at this point, going into detail about the general theory of psychometry, we can simplify matters by regarding the psychometric object in two ways: first, as a kind of 'tape-recording' of what has been going on around it during its history—and second, as a sort of 'tuning-crystal' which acts as a focusing device by which you can mentally link with the owner of the object.

It may be asked—but not, I trust, by those astute enough to be reading this!—why it is important to know the occult and parapsychological view of psychometry. The answer is simply that you cannot create an effective *illusion* of something unless you know what the *reality* is supposed to look like. As a person whose primary training is in theatre, I have always taken the position that the task of the performer, whether playing in Shakespeare or as psychic wonder, is to make the audience believe that *what they are seeing is real, a genuine experience*—a proposition so obvious to theatrical performers as not to need being said. To the degree the illusion is *not* created, the performer has failed.



A brief—I hope—digression:

There are a few people in the mystery field who are deeply shocked at such an idea as that just stated. They feel that the performer must go out of his or her way *not* to create an illusion; otherwise—we are told in all seriousness—the people might actually leave the theatre believing things that aren't really true....!

Indeed they might; if the mental performer has done the job well, the audience almost certainly will—as is true of any well-executed theatrical *experience*. We go to the movies to see Clint Eastwood, and think we do—but we don't, of course; we see imaginary characters portrayed by Eastwood. These roles are picked, often, to create a consistent image of the 'movie Clint Eastwood'—who may have little or nothing to do with Clint Eastwood the actor. This created image is very profitable for Mr. Eastwood, and a lot of fun for us to watch. Would it be logical to leave a viewing of *DIRTY HARRY* or *UNFORGIVEN* and demand our ticket-money back on the grounds that Eastwood "*really isn't like that?*"

No, of course—because this is *show business; show*; it is *not reality* (whatever that is!).

In his NEO-MAGIC, S.H. Sharpe says:

There are some people who object to a conjurer seriously acting the part of a magician on the grounds of veracity. This, in my view, is fanaticism. Provided the audience has been told that what they are about to see is natural entertainment, on the programmes or elsewhere, the more a conjurer can

PSYCHOMETRY

convince them of magical forces at work during the performance, the better. To object to such fiction is on a par with sending for a policeman when dead men fall out of cupboards on the stage. When a man goes into a theatre he enters a house of illusion.

I'll go even further than Sharpe; I'll point out that such 'disclaimers' as he suggests be used have been found to have a negligible effect in dissuading the spectators from belief in the performer's powers. Such palliatives may soothe the performer's conscience—but that's all they do.

(NOTE 1993: In fairness to Sharpe I should mention his essay at the end of his more recent *CONJURER'S PSYCHOLOGICAL SECRETS*, in which he discusses this question with somewhat different conclusions.)

As to the moral question of creating a false belief in a spectator's mind—apart from all else we must note that *most of what most people believe, on all kinds of subjects, is not true or only partially so*. Here I am not begging the question but simply attempting to put the illusions created by the mentalist in perspective. In the creation of false beliefs the mystery worker is near the very bottom of the ladder; to reach the top he or she would have to clamber over advertising agencies, political groups, government officials and (dare we suggest?) a few self-styled spokesmen for some specific deity here or there....

...too, it must be pointed out that while the performer may be creating a false belief in his or her powers, the *phenomena* therefore believed in may still be quite real, regardless of the specific instance that inspired the belief. The existence of an illusion does not automatically mean that what it represents does not exist in reality.

Brief, I promised, so brief will I be:

It is not accidental that many major critics of mentalism and psychic entertainment—people who characterize performers in this field as 'criminals'—are chiefly associated with games, puzzles and mathematically-based tricks and curiosities rather than performance material. Their view seems to be that magic and mentalism should ideally be the presentation of puzzles on the stage, as challenges to the audience to attempt a solution.

It is easy to puzzle someone; any child can do it. It is difficult to create a convincing theatrical illusion; few mystery performers can consistently accomplish this.

Puzzles and magic have nothing to do with each other.

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Where was I?

Ah, yes—psychometry. Most contributions to the literature of the psychometric effect have tended to focus on systems of marking the envelopes (or other containers) as a way of connecting the objects with their owners. Some of these methods have been extremely ingenious; in a later subsection we'll take a look at some of them, and suggest some new approaches—and alternatives—to marking.

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This is not, however, a compilation of marking systems. Such information will be found in publications like Tony Raven's RAVEN ON PSYCHOMETRY (lecture notes), and in the literature; check the listings in Jack Potter's MASTER INDEX TO MAGIC IN PRINT published by Micky Hades.

Another thing you will not find in these pages is the index-card category of routine, where spectators write information on the cards and you connect said information with the proper individual. There are many such routines, ranging from L. Vosburgh Lyon's *Graphology*¹ to Rutledge and Thompson's *Singin' In the Brain*²—Astro-Psychometry by Fogel and Corinda—and *Desire* by Phil Goldstein³. Such routines can be presented very effectively, but they are not really psychometry; in effect they are closer to Who-Has-What effects such as Quantimental and the *Three-Object Divination*.

Here I am limiting myself to a study of the classic psychometry test as earlier defined. As you will see, that will give us more than enough ground to cover.

¹The Jinx, No. 74; Jan. 6, 1940; page 493.

²BETWEEN TWO MINDS, page 55.

³THE BLUE BOOK OF MENTALISM, page 4.

PRESENTATION

In the limited amount of space at my disposal it is impossible to detail specific presentations of psychometry from start to finish. Even were it not, I have neither the ego nor the inclination for such a project. Besides—as I indicated in *NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD*—the creation of specific presentations is the one part of mentalism that *must* be left up to the individual performer. Mentalism is ninety percent personality, and how each performer presents performance material must be an outgrowth of his or her personality.

There are, however, a few general points regarding presentation of the specific effect of psychometry which it might be useful to consider at this point.

SELLING THE PSYCHOMETRY EFFECT

As mentioned earlier, many performers have a misapprehension of what psychometry is—and therefore when they present the effect they tend to trivialize it. If all you're going to do is discover which object belongs to which person, you may as well do some more straightforward divination, e.g., Corinda's *Money Box*⁴, my *Cashseer* or *Handbook* described further on in this book⁵, or any of the many other Who-Has-What effects; or even Agostin's *20-Card Memory*⁶. As divination effects they are much more appealing and much less trouble than even the briefest of psychometry routines.

The difference, of course, is that if you are doing psychometry properly the focus of it is not on the divination aspect but on what you 'read' from the object. You do not simply describe

⁴THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, page 150.

⁵Pages 553 and 496 respectively.

⁶*The Jinx*, No. 59; Aug. 1939; page 428.

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the physical appearance of the person but give something of their history; you speak of their personality and current situation; and even describe such other people as may have possessed the object before the present owner acquired it.

How you do this does not concern us now; the technique will be discussed later in the *GENERAL TECHNIQUE* subsection. The point here is that the *effect* is the reading you give, and the information brought out in that reading; identification of the owner of the object is but a part—and by no means the major part—of this effect.

In most presentations I have seen, if there was any attempt at a reading it usually consisted of a brief physical description of the owner, climaxed (?) by pointing out the spectator and getting a verification that the object indeed belonged to that spectator. In the type of presentation we are now discussing, this is clearly not the best procedure.

Consider: you are going to make a number of statements about the object and its owner. These statements won't have much effect if you are addressing them to the empty air, and if you finish by *then* locating the owner, the rest of the audience will at that point wonder how much of what you said is accurate.

The preferred procedure here is, in fact, similar to that in question-answering acts; you make one or two brief statements about the impressions you receive, and then identify the spectator who owns the object and confirm that the statements you have made thus far are correct.

Then, this identification made, you continue with the reading, verifications coming from the spectator as you continue to state facts within the reading.

Use of the term *reading* may be misleading, since it is usually applied to something along the lines of fortunetelling; it is important to realize that a psychometric reading is quite different. Here you do not use stock or cold reading techniques to any great degree; you don't dwell on the spectator's childhood or predict what's going to happen to him or her in the future; you don't use vague generalities—if you say something about the personality of the spectator, you tie it to a specific event, e.g., *"You went through a period of great anxiety last year when you moved to a new town."*

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You must always keep in mind the idea of what you are supposed to be doing—picking up information from the vibrations of the object. If you are handed a set of car keys you can't talk about the spectator's childhood because when the spectator was a child he or she *didn't have any car, let alone the car to which these keys fit*. The object absorbs vibrations which you are detecting; clearly it (the object) can't have absorbed vibrations from events which occurred *before it was acquired*—or created, for that matter. Logic likewise dictates that if you get an object no more than a year or two old, the reading you give cannot extend back in time any further than that.

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It should be noted that the reverse is also true; often you will get objects that are *older* than the spectator and/or have been owned by other people. In this situation the present owner may not know anything of the previous history of the object.

If this is the case you can content yourself with one or two actual facts and make up the rest. Two caveats here:

First—since you can't get verifications it would be unwise to spend much time on this.

Second—the parts you make up should be on the same 'informational level' as the other statements of the same general tone. In other words, don't mix detailed information which is uncheckable with general information which is. This procedure will add verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative—or mentalist.

From time to time, however, you will get an object with a history that is known to the spectator—either because it was handed down by another member of the family or was purchased as an antique or art object with a recognized provenance and pedigree.

In such cases you will have a golden opportunity to knock the audience out of their chairs—because while it is conceivable to them that you might have dug up some information on them, how could you know that Uncle Joe was a prospector in Alaska?

You will not, of course, be able to do this with every object you get—but you'll be able to do it surprisingly often, as you will soon learn.

To sum up: keep in mind the theory and concept of what it is you're supposed to be doing—and make your actions consistent with that logic.

PERFORMANCE SITUATIONS—GOOD AND BAD

There is a 'folk-belief' within magic that a good performer should be able to perform anywhere, and should be able to do his or her material under any conditions...

...even if there is any great validity to that belief (and I'm inclined to doubt it), why on earth do inappropriate effects if you don't have to?

Within mentalism, performers have a certain logistical advantage in that the props used generally don't take up much space; indeed, one performer of my acquaintance can do a ninety-minute show out of his wallet!

This being the case, it is no great hardship for the mentalist to carry a few extra items which can be substituted if need be for regular program items that would not work as well in the specific situation presented.

This is mentioned simply to observe that the performer should never be trapped by a lack of material into doing effects that may be fine for most situations—but not the one that has to be done *now*.

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Generalities aside—when should psychometry be performed, and when should it be omitted?

Though there are certainly exceptions to all rules, I will tempt fate by formulating one: *the shorter the show, the less you should consider using psychometry.*

Psychometry—correctly done—is not an effect that can be rushed; it has a particular dramatic line that simply cannot be adapted to a slam-bang presentational style. It is *possible* to do a psychometry routine in a few minutes, certainly; but not advisable.

I will go so far as to say that in a fifteen-minute slot—a not uncommon length for an act working nightclubs or in revues—there is for all practical purposes no way to properly present the effect of psychometry. Consider: you can't use it as an opener, and you can likewise never guarantee that you'll have a strong enough finish on the routine to work it as a closer—so you need at least two other effects. If those effects are noticeably briefer than the psychometry routine the act will be way out of balance.

A possible exception to the above time-limit is when you do *only* psychometry, letting it serve as the entire act. This can work very effectively in *the right situation*. Such situations include private-party work, or for the 'second act' on a cruise ship (but not the first). It wouldn't work in the aforementioned nightclub or revue—simply because to be properly appreciated it requires an attention span and a concentration not certain to be found in a drinking audience. Also, from a purely technical standpoint—in such shows it really is not practical to go wandering around down in the audience, and while you might be able to work from a runway to the tables immediately adjacent, it is not prudent to depend on such a layout being available.

Another point here is that revue shows in particular are very tightly run—and there's no practical way for you to control the length of a psychometry routine to the split-second.

We will discuss the psychometry act as a thing in itself further on in this section.

Other than being presented as an act in itself, psychometry is best presented within a mentalism show of from forty-five to ninety minutes duration (and few mentalists, doing mentalism only, can carry a show effectively for much longer than that). In such shows, I feel it is best placed in the last half of the program—perhaps about the third item from closing. This is, of course, a matter of personal taste and judgment, and each performer will have to come to his or her own decision. My reasoning for the positioning mentioned is that I think the next-to-closing item should be briefer than a psychometry routine, and the closing item briefer still. I also feel that in the performer's last two items, working within the audience or having spectators on the stage should be avoided if at all possible.

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This kind of routine should not be done in places where you have to fight for attention—outdoor arena-type shows, fairs, etc.—for the reasons given in relation to nightclub and revue-type work; you are trying to draw the spectators into a little acting piece, and it is difficult to do that without their strong and continuous attention.

HOW MANY ITEMS?

Directly related to the point above is the question of how many spectators take part in the routine—since the number of objects you have to deal with determines in large part how long the routine will play.

In the literature of psychometry, advice on this point has varied considerably. Annemann suggests a dozen items; Milbourne Christopher thinks six are sufficient. Other writers give numbers as low as three and as high as twenty.

However—all these suggestions are predicated on the usual type of performance of this effect, i.e., simple identification of what belongs to which spectator. If you are doing a Who-Has-What effect, it would seem reasonable that the more items you have the better; but—as pointed out previously—if that's what you want there are better ways of achieving the effect than psychometry.

In the sort of presentation recommended here, the number of items is for the most part immaterial, since the major aspect of the effect is the *reading* and not the identification. The skills you will have to develop to perform the effect in this way are not instantly acquired, however; they will take time and practice.

Therefore—given that you are going to use the techniques to be described—I recommend you begin with a larger number of items than you will eventually use, say nine to a dozen. This is done for two reasons:

First: until you are good enough for the *reading* aspect to carry the weight of the presentation it is just as well to keep the identification angle strong, and for that the more objects the better.

Second: the more objects you have to work with, the more likely you are to find a few that produce the kind of clues you will develop into a strong reading.

There are reasonable limits to be observed; I trust you will not psychometrize twenty objects one after the other—unless you are trying for an obscure category in the GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS.

As you develop strong reading technique you can scale down the number of items to five or six, or even less; which leads us logically and inevitably to the next subsection.

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SINGLE OBJECT READINGS

At this point we are entirely away from psychometry as usually practiced by mentalists, and much in line with psychometry as practiced by psychometrists.

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As this heading indicates, you take a single object from a spectator and give a reading; obviously this will require a high degree of skill in the techniques of object-reading to be described.

Some performers may be a bit uncomfortable with such a straightforward procedure, with nothing to fall back on but sheer technique. This is a proper way to feel, since what I am suggesting here is the most difficult kind of presentation.

There are ways in which you can give yourself a safety line in doing this. The best way, perhaps, is to have a supplementary effect going on simultaneously which can carry the presentation if the reading itself should be inadequate.

An obvious effect would involve the idea that the nature of the object itself is unknown—it is sealed in an envelope or bag, put in a box, etc. There are countless ways in which you can contrive to get a peek at the item—window envelope or bag, X-ray box and so on—and given this information you can intersperse the object-reading with points of description of the object itself.

Another approach would be a pre-show clipboard handed to the spectator; we'll discuss possible handling of this further on.

One important point about the concealed-object presentation: a technique will have to be employed that will allow you at least several seconds to observe and study the object, since the object-reading techniques cannot usefully be applied on the basis of one brief peek at the item.

CONCEALED ITEMS

As a logical follow-on to the preceding point we should now consider the presentation in which the items are apparently never seen by you—or so it appears to the audience.

This subdivides, from the standpoint of technique, into two categories—the situation in which you *genuinely* never see the items—and the situation in which you are able to see the items without the audience being aware of it.

Unknown Objects

126 In this kind of presentation you will usually hold a sealed package (envelope, etc.) containing the item; you deliver the reading and identify the owner—who, given the package, opens it and verifies that you are correct.

This is, in fact, the way many genuine psychometrists work; as previously indicated, it has serious drawbacks for our present purposes.

A number of techniques have been devised for marking envelopes so that they may be discerned by touch alone; a particularly interesting example is Peter Warlock's *Sense In The Dark* which appeared in his magazine *Pentagram*⁷. Warlock suggested the use of a double-walled envelope, with a shim glued in

⁷Vol. 6, No. 10; July 1947; page 71.

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a particular position between the walls; behind your back, or in the dark of a séance, you use a magnet to locate the shim and thus identify the envelope.

Other methods include spots of glue and the ever-popular nail-nick and its variations; these have their advantages and drawbacks and will be discussed in the subsection on *GENERAL TECHNIQUE*.

It should be noted that—even with a heavy manila envelope—it is often possible to tell by feel what the object is, and even get fairly specific about it. It is reasonably easy to tell, for example, when the object is a ring, and not much more difficult to distinguish between the very characteristic shape of a class ring and such others as a signet, ring with jewel or stone, or a plain band. Even this limited information can be useful.

Do bear in mind, however, that you don't have to describe the object; that's not the effect. At very worst you can make a few educated guesses about the spectator and finish by featuring the identification. Obviously, because of its limitations, I do not recommend this way of going about it.

Known Objects

By this heading I mean objects *known to you*—the audience being unaware that you have been able to directly view the objects or otherwise be aware of them. We will discuss the actual technique of getting this knowledge further on.

From the standpoint of presentation—our concern here—it is questionable that there is any great advantage, in strength of effect to be gained, by the performer never apparently seeing the items; there is, however, one aspect worth considering.

It is this; while *you* seemingly don't know what the item is, *the audience doesn't either*. This means that your statement that (for example) the spectator owns a late-model car is somewhat stronger if the other members of the audience don't know that you're working with a ring of keys.

In such cases you do not, of course, display the item at the denouement; either you hand back the still-sealed envelope and have the spectator verify that it contains his property—or you dump the item out into your cupped hand, take it to the spectator, and as you give it to him say, "*Does this belong to you?*" or "*Is that your property?*"—never naming or describing just what the item is.

BLINDFOLDS

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In this subsection we will consider only the fake blindfold, since there is nothing to be gained by the use of a *genuine* blindfold. Also, we will not cover specific methodology, since it is thoroughly discussed in Will Dexter's *SEALED VISION* and in *Step Five: Blindfolds* of Tony Corinda's *THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM*.

Here we are only concerned with presentational aspects.

In psychometry there is one great advantage to the use of a blindfold; it allows you to study the object—and its owner—quite thoroughly, without this

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being obvious to the audience. Since the spectators can't see where you're looking—you're not supposed to be looking at all!—it also means that you can study one object on your table while 'psychometrizing' another; likewise, as you are guided by the vibrations to the owner of the article, you have an excellent opportunity to get a close look at one of the other spectators taking part, giving you additional clues and information to be incorporated into that spectator's reading.

Too, this means that if you get an object that has writing or printing on it, this information is theoretically not accessible to you and can be made use of...

...BUT NOTE CAREFULLY: Resist the temptation to make any direct statements concerning the information. For example—if the card happens to give the person's home address, and you are familiar with that area, you can make a reasonable judgment about the kind and quality of their house or apartment—but if you start calling off the street address or making other such direct revelations, you have (a) turned the psychometry effect into an X-ray Eye routine and (b) changed a convincing mystery into something less than that.

There are many blindfolding methods in the literature, which range from the simple to the very complex. Here—since the effect is psychometry and not X-ray vision—little importance should be placed on the blindfold. From the audience's point of view it should be simply a device to help you concentrate by shutting out distractions—and therefore something as simple as Annemann's rolled-handkerchief method⁸ is better for this purpose than bread-dough, bandages, steel mask and the like.

For those who wish something with the same casual appearance but a bit more visually appealing, you might consider the use of a 'slumber shade' or 'sleep mask'—the only blindfold-like item your audience is likely to be familiar with; Shields and Jones, in their *Double-Daring* column in *Genii*⁹, have shown how quickly and easily such things may be gaffed.

An angle I have used is simply to close my eyes when I am trying to 'get the vibrations'—after a moment I frown and say, "No, it's still too bright"—and abstractedly take out the pre-rolled handkerchief and tie it over my eyes without making any direct comment to the audience. It is clear to them that I am simply trying to shut out light, and have improvised something to help me do that.

LOCATING THE PARTICIPANTS

In most presentations of psychometry I have seen—and I blush to admit, some I have done—a major presentational flaw has cropped up again and again:

The performer has been handed the bunch of envelopes, bags or whatever. He opens one, takes out the object—and then gazes out at the audience

⁸For a good description of this, see Dexter's *SEALED VISION*, page 9.

⁹Vol. 24, No. 1; Sept. 1959; page 16; and No. 2; Oct. 1959; page 57.

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with a vaguely puzzled air, and says, "Will those people who sealed up objects please stand?"

Sometimes it is a bit less blatant; the spectators taking part are asked to raise their hands... but it comes to the same thing.

I've done it; you've done it; we've all done it... and it really makes no sense.

Consider: if we are really doing what we are *supposed* to be doing we should be able to locate the spectators *out of the whole audience*. As performers with mystical mental powers, we should at least be able to remember who received envelopes a few minutes before. From the standpoint of the audience, the only reason a performer makes a request like that is to make things easier for himself or herself; that, I submit, is not a valid reason.

It may be argued that this 'gets by', that the audience doesn't attach any importance to it. Well, possibly; but even when the audience *doesn't* consciously notice it, they have the feeling that there is something that just doesn't ring true. Also—this is a flaw easily corrected, in a number of simple ways; we will give specific methods in the subsection concerned with *SUBSIDIARY TECHNIQUE*.

THE PSYCHOMETRY ACT

The effect of psychometry is one of the few that can actually carry the weight of being performed as an act; indeed—many who work as psychics rather than mentalists (Peter Hurkos was one example) have done little else in their entire career.

Even so, there is a limit to how long any single item can sustain. My personal view is that if you want to do a psychometry act lasting longer than twenty minutes at most, you had better have the charisma to carry it...

...and if you have *that* much charisma you ought to get into politics, where a combination of deception and charm pay off so much better!

Within the act you will want to vary the pace as much as is possible. If, having just done an extensive reading, you choose as your next item something of obvious recent manufacture, you can make one or two brief statements and then hand it back to its owner with the comment that it just hasn't been in their possession long enough to build up a store of impressions. Aside from producing a change of tempo, this lends a convincing air to the proceedings.

In the final subsection I will discuss some subsidiary effects that can be incorporated into a basic psychometry routine; they are most appropriate in the context we are now discussing.

There I will also give techniques and applications for the use of a pre-show clipboard. Use of such a method can help us with one major problem of the act, which is the closing item. One cannot always be sure—depending on the technique used—that the last object will lend itself to a bang-up superduper finish. If, however, we have prior information on the people who are taking

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part, we've provided ourselves with an insurance policy against disaster; we know that we have at least one stunner of a revelation for the climax.

(Here, again, I must warn you not to lose sight of what the effect is supposed to be; we're doing psychometry—not crystal-gazing or audience readings—and the acting part of the presentation must indicate that the information we produce is coming to us from and through the object.)

I also feel—again, a personal opinion—that this kind of act is best done for those already familiar with your work; this is why I specified earlier that the psychometry routine be used as a *second*, but not first, act in a cruise-ship situation. The first time the audience sees you, you are by definition an unknown quantity, and it is in your best interest to show them who and what you are as quickly as possible.

Even the best of psychometry routines require a certain amount of preliminary groundwork before anything of an impressive nature can begin to happen; this is fact. It is also fact that unless you are unusually fortunate, your audience is not going to suspend their judgment for very long; if nothing has happened in the first couple of minutes, they will begin to think that nothing *is going to happen*, and will lose interest. It will be difficult for you to get that interest back once it's been lost.

If, on the other hand, the audience has seen you and knows what you can do, and that you're competent and interesting, they'll be willing to invest a little more time to see what new wonder you have in store for them on *this* occasion.

There are special situations, however, where these drawbacks to doing psychometry 'cold' can be avoided. On a daytime TV talk show, for example, the audience's attention will be maintained by the host of the show during the preliminaries. Also, these preliminaries can be done in large part during a station break, since the host can verify to the viewing audience that all is on the up-and-up.

(I specify *daytime* shows since most night-time talk shows are actually variety shows in all but name, and performance requirements are accordingly more stringent; unless you've developed killer technique and presentation for this effect, I do *not* recommend it for this kind of show.)

Even on daytime TV, however, it is better to hold off on doing an effect as complex as psychometry until you have a very strong audience identification. In the right setting psychometry can play extremely strong; in the wrong setting, deadly—as indeed is the case with all mentalism.

GENERAL TECHNIQUE

OBJECT-READING

In a scene which opens A. Conan Doyle's *THE SIGN OF THE FOUR*, Dr. Watson hands a recently-inherited pocket watch to his friend Sherlock Holmes—with the challenge that Holmes describe the character of its late owner.

After a brief examination of the watch Holmes comments that presumably it belonged to Watson's elder brother. Watson admits this, but points out that Holmes could have guessed this from the initials on the watch-case. Amused at his friend's seeming failure, Watson asks if Holmes has any other deductions.

"Your brother was a man of untidy habits—very untidy and careless," says Holmes. *"He was left with good prospects but he threw away his chances, lived for some time in poverty with occasional short bursts of prosperity and finally, taking to drink, he died. That is all I can gather."*

As to how Holmes did it—you'll just have to read the first chapter of the book mentioned.

Sherlock Holmes is fiction, however—though he was based on Dr. Joseph Bell, an Edinburgh physician who astounded his students (among them a young Doyle) with his observations and deductions.

Let's move from fiction to real life; I will now give you two examples of this type of observation, following each with a step-by-step analysis.

Some years ago I was handed a pair of steel-rimmed glasses by my friend Randall Garrett (whose Lord Darcy novels and stories are particularly interesting and entertaining reading for

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magicians and mentalists). Garrett wanted, in the words of Watson, a description of the characteristics and habits of the late owner.

Here's what I told him:

1. The person had been in the military.
2. The person had spent some time near the sea, possibly stationed at a coastal military installation.
3. The person was very likely male.
4. The person was between five foot six inches and five foot ten inches in height.
5. The person was left handed.
6. The person had a narrower than average head.
7. The person's posture had a forward stoop.
8. The person had a narrow nose.
9. The person was very fastidious and methodical.
10. The person was of mature age (over fifty, most probably) at time of death.

How did I arrive at these deductions?

Taking each numbered statement in turn, here's the analysis:

1. The glasses were of a government-issue type, of a kind manufactured up to the end of World War II for the military.
2. Inside the frame, where the glass met the metal, a green tarnish was present—the effect of salt air.
3. The military service, coupled with the plainness of the glasses, made it unlikely that a woman had worn them.
4. Head size has a strong relation to height; this was estimated by simply trying the glasses on and making a comparison.
5. Of the two nose-pieces, the one on the left had been pushed in slightly toward the frame, indicating that the glasses were put on from the left side and adjusted by pressure from the left.
6. Same procedure as in No. 4. Here I had to make an adjustment based on the distance between the centers of the lenses, and compare it with the width of the glasses as a whole.
7. The glasses were bifocal and the inset (lower) lens was quite strong; individuals with weak near-vision almost always develop such a stoop.
8. Examination of the nose-pieces; see No. 5.
9. While there was tarnish in the frame (as mentioned in No. 2), there was no trace of it anywhere else—which indicated that the glasses had been kept carefully cleaned and polished for a considerable time.
10. The age of the glasses (see No. 1) and the strong prescription of the lenses.

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Please note that none of the deductions were based on guesses—though the third, as to sex, was of high probability only. As it turned out, all the statements were correct (the glasses had belonged to Garrett's father).

Before examining the implications of this, or analyzing further the technique involved, let's take a look at another example; here Garrett himself made the deductions.

While waiting for a friend's plane at the Austin, Texas airport, Garrett felt the call of nature. Having attended to this, he was about to leave the men's room when he noticed a hat lying crownside down on the floor near the lavatory. Garrett picked it up, studied it briefly and then took it to the Lost-And-Found office.

The girl behind the desk asked him whose hat it was, and if Garrett had seen him lose it.

"No," said Garrett, "*I didn't see him lose it.*" In fine Holmesian tradition he continued:

"Aside from the fact that he is a rather short man of late middle age who has a graying fringe around a bald pate, who wears heavy plastic-rimmed glasses—probably black—and affects jaunty sports clothes, unsuited to his years, and is rather well-dressed, and has had a few more drinks than he should—I know nothing whatever about him."

The girl, somewhat nonplused, put out a PA announcement; the man who showed up to claim the hat confirmed all of Garrett's deductions to the letter.

Garrett explained to me his observations and the deductions he was able to make from them.

OBSERVATION: The hat was a Knox Tyrolean-style with a jaunty feather in the band, expensive and relatively new.

DEDUCTION: The man has money to spend on good quality clothes; young men, however, do not often wear hats, particularly of that style.

OBSERVATION: The sweat band was oil-stained around the sides and back; the stains were higher on the right side than the left.

DEDUCTION: The hat is worn in a jaunty fashion, tilted more to the right than usual.

OBSERVATION: *Sweat* stains on the front and crown, but no *oil* stains (the two stains are quite different in appearance).

DEDUCTION: The man oils his hair, but it does not stain the front or crown with oil; therefore, balding.

OBSERVATION: Three or four short grey hairs stuck to the oily part of the sweat band.

DEDUCTION: The man has gray hair (this also indicated, Garrett pointed out, that the man had his hair cut recently).

OBSERVATION: Along the right side of the leather sweat band was a peculiar depressed strip, as though a leather-working tool had made a straight depression about a quarter of an inch wide, tapering off at the ends.

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DEDUCTION: The only object in a likely position to do this would be the ear-piece of a pair of plastic-rimmed glasses (most probably black, the usual color); this depression also confirmed the second deduction regarding the tilt of the hat.

OBSERVATION: Garrett tried on the hat; it was far too small.

DEDUCTION: Head size has a strong relation to height, as previously noted (though this is not infallible); it seemed probable that the man was much shorter than Garrett's six feet.

Based on these deductions, Garrett was able to make some secondary deductions:

A man who has an expensive hat will have clothes to match; with a hat of that type a sports jacket and slacks would be far more likely than, say, a gray business suit. This also furnished a further clue as to the man's age; he was wearing a hat—and probably clothes—that would have been considered 'youthful' ten years before.

The hair-oil likewise indicated middle age—since at the time this incident occurred young men tended not to oil their hair.

Garrett further speculated that the man was not from Texas or California or anywhere between; clothes like his were far more popular in the eastern part of the country. (This was partially confirmed when Garrett heard the man's accent, somewhat blurred by alcohol, as he thanked the girl for returning the hat.)

It also seemed likely that the man suffered from high blood pressure. Garrett reasoned this way: since the man was not from the immediate area, Austin was merely a stopover. Men who, in late middle age, drink to excess while traveling, have usually been drinkers for quite some time—and this tends to produce high blood pressure. If the man had been fat—which Garrett could not tell from the hat alone—it would have been a more definite indication of high blood pressure and possibly diabetes. (This too was partially confirmed by the redness of the man's face—a redness *not* due to sunburn, which produces a very different pattern from the floridity created by internal causes.)

And finally, as to how Garrett knew the man had been drinking—who but a drunk would lose his hat in the men's room?

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The two examples given have not been exaggerated or altered in any way; they are described as they occurred. I stress this to point up the fact that I am not talking about hypothetical possibilities, but things which can really be done.

Certainly it is not easy; it requires a good general knowledge, constant practice and testing, and the ability to develop a 'special way' of looking at things. What is this special way?

Sherlock Holmes called it the facility for *reasoning backwards*, and pointed out that if you were to present a person with a certain train of events they'd be likely to be able to tell you what the result would be. *If*, however, you

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presented them with a conclusion or result, they might find it very difficult to *work backward* and tell you what sequence of events brought it about.

Thus the problem of gaining information from the observation of an object breaks itself down into two areas: *First*, you must learn to notice things, to become aware of every possible detail—and *Second*, you must then be able to analyze what you see to determine what action or situation brought it about.

As performers in the mystery field, we are acutely aware of how much a spectator does not see, even when it is right in front of him. Such things as the *Paris In The Spring* observation test, or Corinda's *Odd Man Out* packet routine, are direct demonstrations of this fact. Just as the spectator watching an effect sees less, so must you learn to see more.

To quote Holmes:

Let the enquirer begin by...on meeting a fellow mortal, learning at a glance to distinguish the history of the man, and the trade or profession to which he belongs...by a man's finger-nails, by his coat-sleeve, by his boots, by his trouser-knees, by the callosities of his forefinger and thumb, by his expression, by his shirt-cuff—by each of these things a man's calling is plainly revealed. That all united should fail to enlighten the competent enquirer in any case is almost inconceivable.

Indeed; but becoming that 'competent enquirer' is far from a simple matter. Holmes also tells us:

It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the data...it biases the judgment...the difficulty is to detach the framework of fact—of absolute undeniable fact—from the embellishments of theorists...having established ourselves on this sound basis...to see what inferences may be drawn and what are the special points...

I recommend that you read—or reread—the Sherlock Holmes stories—not so much for his analysis of specific clues, some of which are not valid for our era, but for his way of thinking, of approaching the problem. Note, for example, in *The Adventure Of The Blue Carbuncle*, Holmes' analysis of a hat, and compare it with Garrett's real-life experience; note also, in that same story, how Watson sees all that Holmes sees—but is unable to think backward and determine what it all means.

Other useful reading would include (as I mentioned in *OMNIMANCY*) books dealing with criminology, criminalistics and crime scene investigation. Such books are particularly valuable in showing how a clue, or physical indication, is converted into a fact; this is the aspect of object-reading you will find most difficult to acquire.

It should be noted that when you're using these techniques in a psychometry routine you have a great advantage over the examples cited—which is that you have not only the object but the spectator to whom it belongs as subjects for analysis. A deduction made on the basis of the object can be confirmed—

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or canceled out—by what can be learned from analyzing the owner of that object. If, for example, the object is a set of keys to a Ferrari or Testarossa, a reasonable assumption might be that the person has a bit of money; if the person you know to have offered the keys looks like he dresses out of a Goodwill bin, a probability now is that he has borrowed the car. Note that it is a probability only, and by no means certain; many rich people, particularly the young rich, dress exactly as they please. And remember Howard Hughes?

It would be possible to give several more specific examples of object-analysis—but since each new object presents specific problems and challenges, such examples would not give you any all-purpose yardsticks. The only possible merit of further descriptions would be to convince you that this can actually be done—and if I haven't convinced you of that by now there's little point in wasting more space.

In fact—to be quite honest—object-reading is not something that every person can do. Much as with contact mindreading, this *reasoning backward* requires a particular and peculiar mind-set which some people have—and some do not. I will say, however, that anyone who otherwise meets the requirements of competent mentalism can practice object-reading to at least *some* degree.

There is little more I can say about this; object-reading cannot be *taught*—except possibly on a one-to-one basis—but it *can* be learned. You learn it by doing; by taking the object and seeing everything, and then thinking about what you have seen and coming to conclusions; by stating those conclusions and finding out if you're right—and if not, why you're wrong. Do bear in mind that you have the psychometry routine itself as a safety-net; even when your reading goes awry, you *can* end successfully by identifying the owner. Given that this is true, you have a perfect situation to earn-while-you-learn; a good thing, because this you can *only* learn by doing.



I cannot resist the temptation to include here one other approach to psychometric technique:

Do it legitimately.

136 | By this I mean—hold the object and begin talking, saying whatever your intuition tells you to say. If you are consistently wrong it is likely that you do not possess the gift of genuine psychometry...

...and if you are consistently right I suggest you get in touch with the Amazing Randi!

OBJECT-LINKING

By the above heading I mean what most people think of as the basic methodology of psychometry—ways of linking the object with its owner.

As I have noted in the introductory comments, there are many such methods available to the profession, and you might want to check those

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sources. The concepts which follow are, unless otherwise noted (and to the best of my knowledge), original with me.

For purposes of clarity we must consider two basic approaches to the psychometry effect; those where the items offered are put in *separate* containers or wrappings, and those where all items are collected in (or on) one container.

Our first group of methods will concern the separate containers; of these the most commonly used are envelopes, so let us begin with them:

Eraser's Edge

A hard rubber eraser is run along the *edge* of the envelope; this gives it a very distinctive feel. By giving the four edges values of one, two, four and eight, and using them in combination, this technique can be used to indicate up to sixteen envelopes. It should be noted that it will also work behind the back, since you can orient the envelope by feeling for the point of the flap. Such a mark is virtually invisible, and could only be detected if the spectator opened the envelope out flat.

Stampede

A rubber stamp bearing your return address is used. A very slight variation in position—closer to the left edge, closer to the top edge, tilted slightly to left or right—while invisible to the spectator will be very noticeable to you.

Another approach to using the rubber stamp involves the use of different brands of stamp pad which, again, will produce differences obvious to you but not to the spectators. For this, red ink seems to work better than black, having a bit more variation.

Post Facto

Here the envelopes are *printed* with your address; all are of course identical—but the *postage stamp* you have so thoughtfully provided on each one is not; the perforations have been trimmed on one or more of the four sides. The premise is that these are normally used by you as business reply envelopes; you just happen to have them handy. This therefore only makes sense in a supposedly impromptu situation.

Cornered

The envelopes here must be 'fresh out of the box' and undamaged. The marking is done by 'bouncing' one corner of the envelope on any hard surface, thus blunting its point. As with the first technique, this can be felt as well as seen—and the one-two-four-eight combination idea can also be used with this.

Branded

In this method the envelopes are not marked at all—in fact, a spectator could take his to a lab and fail to find a secret identifier because there is none.

What you have done is simply to shop around until you have *five different brands* of the same size white envelope—five which, while appearing identical, can be told apart by you—and assign them values from one to five. The only

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drawback to this method is that finding such a set of five is bothersome, and gets more difficult as the number of envelopes used increases. The method itself, however, is quite workable and practical.

There are, of course, many other ways of wrapping objects; small grocery bags can be used, for example, as can almost all kinds of containers, from jewelry boxes to film cans—and at times the kind of container will be dictated by your choice of presentation.

Let's consider a few other approaches:

Printsiple

You take a double sheet of newspaper and tear it into eight large pieces, which are given to the spectators to wrap up their objects. Here you have simply noted a prominent feature (heading or picture) in each of the eight sections, and you fold and tear the paper in a set pattern so you will know the order of the pieces. This method is most logically applied to an (apparently) impromptu situation.

The temptation to use this in the same routine as a torn-newspaper prediction—such as *Headline Hunter* and its variants¹⁰—should be resisted.

Seequence

A point that has bothered a few performers is the necessity for handing out the containers in sequence; this can be avoided by mixing the envelopes and then handing them out in an apparent haphazard fashion which results in a proper ascending sequence left to right. There is, however, another way.

The idea here is to use items which by their very nature can only be taken in order—Scotch™ Tape, for example, which you have unrolled, marked and re-rolled; each spectator in turn takes a piece to seal his or her package. (Of course you must see to it that these pieces are all much the same length.)

Any kind of writing pad may be used; it is logical to tear the sheets off in order from the top.¹¹

Another way to use this idea is at a party or special situation in a private home. You slip out to the kitchen, unroll the paper towels and mark them, then of course roll them back up. You should always mark a few more than you intend to use since there is the chance a few paper towels may be used before you get to them again.

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A bit of thought will suggest other items that can be used with this principle.

PsychomeTryst

In this final method for this subsection we have a technique to be used in those situations where you have no opportunity to get at the containers and mark them. The only requirement other than the containers is a deck of cards.

¹⁰Discussed in *MINDSCRIPT 2*, page 381 of this volume.

¹¹Raymond L. Beebe's system of marking notebook pages, described in his *My Favorite Living And Dead Test* in Ganson's *MAGIC OF THE MIND*, page 38, has an application here.

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The spectators place their objects in the envelopes (or whatever); they then each select a card from the deck and seal it in the envelope along with the object. You make your divinations as usual.

It is, of course, only necessary for you to know *who got what card*; you pay no attention to the containers. This can be accomplished in a number of ways.

The simplest and quickest is to note and remember the top five or six cards of the deck and then execute a crossing-the-cut force. If the cut-crossing is done as the first part of the routine, by the time you get back to the deck to have each spectator in turn take a card, no one will remember precisely how the cut was marked.

If you have a full-deck stack there are two possible approaches: a spectator can give the deck a straight cut, deal off a card each to the spectators taking part and then take one for herself—you simply spot the bottom card of the deck and thus know the sequence of selections. Another way—and here you really must use a memorized stack rather than a cyclic (Si Stebbins, Eight Kings) stack—is to hand each spectator bunches of cards; since you hand each the same number of cards, they can then choose any card from their packet to seal in the envelope. You will know which group it came from and therefore which person.

These are only a few suggestions; given the basic concept, it is clear that there are endless applications of card-handling technique to determine who belongs to what card.

As with *Printsiple*, the urge to *divine* the cards should be suppressed; that's simply exposing the method in reverse.

The presentational concept is that you will use psychometry with the object to determine the subject's past and present—and cartomancy with the card to peer into their future.

Obviously any kind of cards can be used in this routine; it is particularly effective with Tarot cards.



We will now discuss those methods where all the objects are collected in one container.

Many years ago one of magic's true geniuses—U.F. Grant-produced an item he called the Mentalist's Napkin. This is basically a Devil's Handkerchief but with one important change, which is that one side of the pocket area is of clear plastic. The audience, of course, is unaware of this window. The major use of the prop is to read questions collected in the hanky, and it is still one of the very best ways of doing that effect—but of course it could also be used for psychometry; as each person secretly places an object into the bag you could *see* it.

A number of variations of this prop have come out over the years; currently on the market is a two-compartment cloth bag, one section containing the

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window. In *Pabular*¹² Barrie Richardson described the use of a simple paper bag, likewise provided with a window, specifically for the psychometry effect. Peter Warlock, in his *New Pentagram*¹³, has described a similar approach using a large manila envelope, along with some excellent pointers on handling.

A different approach, described by Charles D. Potts in *The Magic Circular*¹⁴, and later by Karrell Fox and others, involves the use of a bag with several inner compartments; as you go to each person in turn, your fingers within the bag open a new compartment to receive the object. While in theory this is a nice solution, in the hands of any other than an expert performer there is the chance of fumbling and awkward pauses while getting the right pocket open.

Bagatelle

My own solution for this version uses a plain cloth bag of thin but opaque material; it is ungaffed.

The secret is so obvious that no one ever seems to notice it—and it is this: while you can't see the object when it is placed into the bag, you can—because of the thin material—tell its shape. From its impact you can get a clue to its weight. The only bit of 'handling' required is that as each succeeding object is dropped in you hold the bag so it goes into the opposite corner from the objects already there, so you can get a rough idea of its shape. As you move toward the next person you tilt the bag to bring this object into the corner where the other objects lie; often you will hear a sound of some kind that will likewise provide a clue.

As a trial will show, once the objects have been dumped out onto the table it will be very easy to link them with the characteristics you noted during the collection; you should not, however, attempt this with more than half-a-dozen objects.



From time to time there appear on the magical market boxes with sliding panels through which you can get a glimpse of an object placed within. It is obvious that these can be used in much the same way as the window envelopes and bags previously described. My only suggestion here is that it might be a nice touch to use the box as a container for some other item, and only have it used for the collection as an afterthought; this thought can of course be applied to the other containers mentioned.

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Yet another approach involves a concept first put in print (to the best of my knowledge) by Peter Warlock.¹⁵ He suggested that the objects be collected by an assistant on a tray; the angle here was that the assistant held out the tray so the person could only conveniently reach a particular spot, and thus the

¹²Vol. 3, No. 9; May 1977; page 400.

¹³Vol. 11, No. 2; April 1979; page 14.

¹⁴Vol. 55, No. 615; April 1961; page 124.

¹⁵*New Pentagram*, Vol. 1, No. 4; June 1969; page 32.

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objects ended up in a particular pattern on the tray. This is an excellent and convincing method. For the performer who works alone I'd like to suggest two related alternative approaches.

Tray Chic

In the first version you put on a blindfold and then explain the general concept of psychometry as a spectator collects the items. These are brought to the stage and the effect proceeds as usual. Here you are using a blindfold with good straight-ahead vision and simply *watch the spectators*, taking note of the objects as they are collected. In using this method, the larger the tray the better, so that the assisting spectator's arms are less likely to obscure your view of the proceedings.

In the second version it is preferable to have a *small* tray; this is on a table to one side. You are, as before, blindfolded, and the spectators come up one at a time to place their objects on the tray.

Here you use a downward-peek blindfold, and situate yourself so that the tray is in your line of vision. The tray is used to confine the spectators to a specific area in which to place their items. You can either call on each person in turn to come up, or have them come up in any order they prefer, and identify them by the ancient device of noting their shoes.



This last specific method to be described breaks several of my self-imposed rules—but may be of interest.

Quantum

On your table is a simple wooden stand holding five of your business cards; one at a time five spectators come up and, unseen by you, exchange any of the cards in the stand for a personal credit card. This having been done you collect the five credit cards from the stand and proceed to link them with their owners.

The 'simple wooden stand' is, of course, a Quantimental stand; working will be obvious to the lucky owners of this rare prop. One point—in some stands the slit where the cards are placed may be too narrow for the plastic credit card; you can either attempt to widen it a bit with fine sandpaper—or have the spectators replace your business cards with their own business cards.

It should be noted that it is not necessary to possess a Quantimental stand to use this technique. You can simply have five *marked* business cards. In doing the divination you ask the spectator to hand you the business card and on it you write his name; you simply note which card it is, having memorized the five credit cards as they lie in a row on the table (replacing the row of business cards you started with).

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In this technologically sophisticated age there are many other possible solutions; a box, for example, that would automatically weigh each object as it is placed within and then give you the order-by-weight, either by means of a hidden LED panel on the box itself or by an automatically transmitted FM signal. Trays, tables and bags could likewise be electronically enhanced.

While these approaches do have a certain charm—and for special situations or conditions may in fact be the best solutions—in the usual run of things it is probably better to depend on your own ingenuity and simple props than on expensive and temperamental microcircuitry. Consider: even Tom and Liz Tucker only used their sophisticated equipment as a *secondary* system, and depended for the most part on their own unparalleled mental skills.



One of the most popular marking systems for psychometry—at least in the literature—is the fabled *nailnick*. I'm afraid I must take the somewhat heretical view that I think it is quite undependable. For one thing, as Tony Raven points out, if you use the nailnick on a cheap envelope the mark may fade out of existence.

If, on the other hand, the nick is visible to you—it is also visible to the spectator; I have been present *several times* at performances where spectators *did* spot the nick. (In each case, incidentally, while they commented on the fact to those around them they did not stand up and denounce the performer, who undoubtedly thought he had perpetrated a deep mystery.) To (again) quote Annemann: '*Audiences are far from being as dumb as some performers seem to think.*'

Another highly touted method is that of the zip code, with the last digit changed in an ascending sequence.

There have been several versions of this in print—but in my opinion they are not nearly as good as an unpublished idea created by none other than the Amazing Randi, which he has given me permission to mention here.

Randi used a set of envelopes with his return address; the key digit was within the *apartment* number, *not* the zip code—and thus much less noticeable.

(NOTE 1993: Given the existence of laser printers and fairly sophisticated envelope addressing programs, it is not at all difficult to produce sets of envelopes which have a professionally printed look but which have been differentiated in some fashion.)

I am less than thrilled, however, with any of these methods, because they constitute ironclad and irrefutable proof of your chicanery. It may never happen that people notice this gaff but if they do you have (as they used to say on the lower east side of Manhattan) been caught with your duke in the tambourine.

Do bear in mind that just because you can get away with something for a while is no reason to suppose your methodology has reached perfection.

SUBSIDIARY TECHNIQUE

This subsection will consist of a potpourri of techniques, effects and methods for psychometry, and various additional notes.

LOCATING THE PARTICIPANTS

Here we repeat the heading from *Subsection One*; there we discuss the problem—here we'll consider some solutions.

The simplest, best and most dependable solution is the use of a good mnemonic system. Being a mentalist without a good working knowledge and skill in mnemonic technique is like being a musician without being able to read music; you can manage, certainly, but you're just making things hard for yourself.

The best text is Harry Lorayne's *REMEMBERING PEOPLE* (hard-cover edition from Stein and Day, paperback from Warner Books); it will tell you all you need to know. Another good discussion, while not as modern or complete as Lorayne's, is Furst's *STOP FORGETTING*.

For those who wish to use a mnemonic technique while expending as little effort as possible—using a 'One is a Gun, Two is a Shoe' rhyming list you can associate the object from the list with the person who gets the appropriate envelope. I really don't recommend this and mention it only for the sake of completeness.

Another approach to this problem is to disregard the spectators altogether—to give envelopes to whoever happens to be sitting in chairs you've picked according to a preset pattern. There are a few problems with this—of which the two primary ones are that you are left no latitude to pick people who offer

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good possibilities for the reading; and people might change seats, in which case your mystical abilities would take a rapid nose-dive.

Still another angle is to pick people in a left-to-right pattern who are wearing a particular color; while marginally better than the previous method, this suffers from both disadvantages mentioned.

At a fair number of places a mentalist is likely to perform—conventions, sales meetings, etc.—everyone is wearing a name tag; in this situation you have a number of options. You can distribute your envelopes in alphabetical order—or to people whose names you can picture as objects (Stone, Mills, Post, etc.)—or, if you've had enough time to spot them beforehand, a specific group of names in order.

This brings to mind an idea of P.A. McDonald's which appeared in *Abra*¹⁶ and is excellent; here, rather than going for names, you are going for physical descriptions. In other words—No. One is *always* a man in a brown suit wearing glasses; No. Two is always a brunette woman in a light-colored dress; No. Three is always a man with a beard; and so on. As McDonald points out, this means you can begin a description of the spectator without having to look in his or her direction.

While several of these techniques are perfectly workable, it is still quite clear that the best solution is the first one mentioned—use of a good mnemonic system. Such a system is an essential, in fact, should you wish to use the presentational variation now to be described.

The usual procedure is to take each envelope, open it and proceed with the reading. I suggest that it might be more useful to open all the envelopes—or empty the bag or tray—so that all the objects are out on the table (placed there, if you wish, according to a memorized pattern). Since the method of collection is then no longer in evidence it gradually fades from the mind of the spectator, and the visual picture thus presented has an appearance of authenticity.

Note: should you use this variation—it is well to have another object or two on the table to partially obscure the sight line of the audience; for reasons previously mentioned, you don't want them to be able to study the objects.

THE LAST TWO ITEMS

144 | It has been pointed out by several writers on psychometry that with the last item you have something of a problem; if all others have been identified, it must by elimination belong to the remaining spectator.

The usual solution has been to hand out the last two items at the same time; this is a perfectly workable solution where the presentation is aimed primarily at identifying the spectators—but if you are stressing the object-reading aspect, this tends to give the last two participants short shrift.

The ideal solution is to determine, early on in the routine, which item offers the best possibility for a strong reading; if this reading is well done it will play

¹⁶Vol. 13, No. 58; March 8, 1947; page 67.

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quite acceptably as a climax to the routine. (Also—if, as described in the following subsection, you have clipboard information to work with, there's little question that a sufficiently impressive closing reading can be delivered.)

Another approach is to incorporate a version of Annemann's *Volition*¹⁷ effect, to wit:

Let us say nine items have been collected and six have now been psychometrized. (In this variation the items stay in the envelopes.) After a few words on how everyone possesses the faculty of psychometry to a degree, you then have the three remaining spectators each choose an envelope and—through equivoque—get their own objects back.

A variation on this variation takes a leaf from Chan Canasta: here only the two final envelopes are used. You ask one of the two remaining participants to choose the envelope he thinks is his; he does so. If he has chosen correctly it proves how psychic he is—if wrongly you ask if you can't persuade him to change his mind; if he refuses you end by saying, "Then I'm afraid you're wrong and I'm right because I sense the object you hold belongs to the other person..."

Another way is not to try for a 'big' finish at all, but instead segue into another effect, as follows:

You look for the item least likely to give you a good basis for object-reading—some brand-new item is best for this—and save that for last. When you get to this item you point out that (a) it must belong to the last spectator and (b) since it is so new it has absorbed few vibrations. You then do what reading you can, working from the object and the spectator—and then suggest that you try something else with him or her and use the person's assistance in the next effect.

This is not, obviously, for a punch-effect sort of show but in the right situation it can play very convincingly.

Still another approach is to use the last item or two for a subsequent effect; two such ideas will be mentioned later.

CLIPBOARD READINGS

I am talking specifically here about situations in which the spectators are approached as they enter the venue and are asked to fill out a slip for possible later use in the show. This is done as the first spectators arrive, and those who show up a bit later are not aware that anything has been written by anyone.

(This technique pretty much requires the employment of an assistant—who should appear to be working for the *show-place*, not you. It is, of course, possible to do it yourself; this is, however, inadvisable for any number of reasons.)

It is necessary for the assistant to be able to key the information in the boards to specific members of the audience who do the writing, either by noting the actual seat number or otherwise fixing the location, or by using mnemonics to link the spectator with a specific position on the clipboard.

¹⁷The Jinx, No. 95; page 589.

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Three or four clipboards can be used, with varying printed forms—some asking for questions, some for information. The questions are used in a QA segment of the act, and the information incorporated into the psychometry routine.

(One excellent example of a subtly prepared printed form is that described by John D. Pomeroy in his book *MENTOLOGY*¹⁸.)

There are, of course, any number of good clipboards available, ranging from the classic Nelson UP Board to the *Fields Device*¹⁹. If you plan to use any version of this technique I strongly recommend you get a number of boards, rather than have the assistant dash backstage, get the questions, reset the board and run back out. This is a false economy and also impractical, since you don't want to distract the assistant from the main purpose of corralling the spectators and spotting their locations.

COMBINATIONS WITH OTHER EFFECTS

It would be impossible to list all the possible effects that could be done with the objects you're likely to get in a psychometry routine; however, a few suggestions can be made.

One item that almost always shows up is a ring of keys; this immediately suggests key-bending *after getting the spectator's permission*. It also inspired the following:

Ringkle

You are down to the last two items, which happen to be a ring and a key; concluding the readings for these you hand them back to their owners. One of the two stops you, saying he got the wrong object—the key instead of the ring.

The other spectator, however, shows that he *too* has a key, which he confirms is his own. You appear genuinely puzzled for a moment and ask to see the key the first spectator holds. Looking at it, you exclaim, "... *but this is my key; the key to my house. Just a moment...*"

From your pocket you remove your keycase and there, dangling from one of the keyhooks, is the spectator's ring; you apologize, explaining that these things will sometimes happen and that you have no control over them...

... of course this is just any one of the several models of Ring Flight apparatus; at some point early in the routine you fingerpalm your own housekey from your pocket; and when you pick up the ring you attach it to the pull, and yet another miracle ensues.

If you use this you must play it as indicated; otherwise you have done a nice magical effect and killed the psychometry stone dead.

(IMPORTANT NOTE: If you do the above routine—or, indeed, any type of Ring Flight effect—borrow a ring which is a plain band, *not* one with a stone.

¹⁸Page 16; both book and forms are, I believe, still available from Hades Publications.

¹⁹See page 284.

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A gem may be loose in its setting, and to use a ring containing a stone for this type of effect—or, indeed, most effects—is asking for trouble.)

(NOTE 1993: The keycase effect has now become so common among magicians that I'd have serious doubts about doing *Ringkle*; you will have to decide whether, given this situation, it is right for you.)

As to other effects:

Another excellent possibility here is Phil Goldstein's *Chaos* to be found in THE BLUE BOOK OF MENTALISM²⁰; it can be adapted very nicely.

Since, along with keys, another object that turns up as a near-certainty is—as indicated above—a ring, you have the option of doing the Linking Finger Rings, or any of the many possible ring effects. Do keep in mind, however, that you are doing a *mental* act, and exercise restraint in the choices you make.

If you get a latchkey you can do Jaks' *Turning Key*²¹; if a hatpin, there are a few effects by Jaks and others that would fit; and so on and on. As I said, it is impossible to list all possibilities here—that, in the final analysis, will be a direct result of your own background, knowledge and performing adaptability.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

In this final subsection I will try to cover anything that did not fit neatly under some previous heading, as well as provide a few additional thoughts on some items already mentioned.

With A Medium

A psychometry routine combined with a code act can be very effective, particularly if the performers are skilled at communicating descriptive information. To employ the object-reading techniques discussed herein, however, would require a coding system of effectively limitless range. On the other hand, one great advantage of such a routine is that all the attention is on the medium and not on the person holding the object.

An aspect of this might also be used as a combination—i.e., in a private-party situation you have just done a psychometry routine. You then give the name and phone number of your medium to the audience—one of the objects is chosen—and when called the medium describes it.

There are any number of methods for accomplishing this, including several recent (and expensive) manuscripts touting methods which in a couple of cases might charitably be described as less than certain in working. As has been mentioned, in a psychometry routine there are one or two items you almost always get; you could simply force one of these by equivoque—and if the proper item doesn't show up, you simply don't do the effect. I grant this method doesn't have the baroque charm of the high-priced spreads—but it works.

²⁰Page 27.

²¹*Phoenix*, No. 246; page 984.

In The Dark

Psychometry can fit into a séance setting very nicely—and there is something distinctly strange about sitting at a darkened table and listening to a voice describe your past and present...

...from a technical point of view there are two problems; identifying the envelopes and being able to see the objects enough to do an object-reading.

The first of these is no difficulty; several methods have been given for marking which will work by touch alone (and don't forget the Warlock *Sense In The Dark* with the shimmed envelopes) and more are available elsewhere in the literature.

Getting a look at the items is a bit more troublesome. If you use one of the window-bag methods you will get a glance at them, but not much more. Once the lights are out your approaches are even more limited—you could use something along the lines of a luminous bag but it would give you only minimal help. A method once used by mediums, and invented by Henry Hardin²², could be used: a rubberized cloth bag is put over the whole upper body and in this lightproof enclosure a flashlight is used. Before you seriously consider this I suggest you take into account the fact that most fabrics which are lightproof...are also airproof.

If you work with an assistant, you have no problem: in the dark the assistant simply takes the objects and goes to a lighted room to examine them, getting the information to you in the old-fashioned way—writing on a luminous card—or the newfangled way—an FM pickup stuck in your ear.²³

Or—you could have the room bathed in infrared, and put on a pair of sniperscope goggles...or for that matter use a cascade image intensifier...isn't technology wonderful? And expensive?

Trayce

Mentioning luminous bags reminded me of this—a tray which has had its upper surface coated with luminous paint; obviously any object left on it for a time will create a shadow, and applications of this information can be readily deduced.

148 | Likewise, the commercial item *Clairvoyance*, which again uses luminous materials, suggests a possible use in a psychometry routine where the order, and thus the identification, of the objects could be deduced from the intensity of the glow—the brightest container being the last one placed in the bag, the dimmest being the first one placed in the bag. This is an interesting notion, I think, but I would not go too far regarding its practicality.

²²Trance Vision in *The Jinx*, No. 97; page 599.

²³In this connection you might take a look at the ingenious psychometry demonstration described by Thomas H. Chislett in his *SPIRITS IN THE HOUSE*, pages 18 and 50.

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GiveAway Collecting Box

The ingenious Edmund Rowland published an item under this title in the original *Pentagram*²⁴. It consisted of a small box with a slot in the lid; placed behind the performer's back, it received five poker chips from as many spectators and then the performer (by means of a simple and quickly disposed-of gaff) was able to determine who had dropped in which chip.

While poker chips do not offer much in the way of a good psychometric presentation, coins carried by the spectators might logically carry forward the theme. Those interested are advised to look up the original article.

Contact Mindreading

In an impromptu situation contact mindreading can be used very effectively to determine which of a small number of items belongs to a particular spectator. It is a very elementary test; note too that you have a perfectly logical reason to grasp the spectator's wrist—to 'tune in' on the psychometric vibrations (naturally).



AFTERWORD

The art of psychometry is a few thousand years old, and the illusion can't be much less ancient. In view of that, I hardly expect this to be the last word on the subject.

As noted, I have not even tried to cover the many card-writing versions, from those mentioned in the introductory comments to such as Genc Gloye's *Doodles* routine²⁵ or Ray Hyman's *What's In A Name?*²⁶—there are enough possibilities there for another monograph of this length.

I have tried to be reasonably complete in my treatment of the subject; at the same time I've tried to avoid going over methods and techniques readily available elsewhere, and with which the intended reader of this work is familiar. Soon enough I've no doubt I will learn to what extent I've achieved this aim.

Psychometry makes great demands on the performer's technique and performance skills—and rewards him or her with one of the most convincing dramatic illusions in the whole range of mentalism.

If what you've read here helps you in creating that illusion, this section has served its purpose.

²⁴Vol. 8, No. 6; March 1954; page 41.

²⁵*Linking Ring*, Vol. 36, No. 11; Jan. 1957; page 76.

²⁶*Linking Ring*, Vol. 32, No. 7; Sept. 1952; page 66.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

Candleabra—page 288

Speakay—page 607

Quinsation—page 671

Psidentity—page 685

SCRIPT

[1981]

IT IS INTERESTING to note that while billet routines—effects involving folded slips of paper—are quite popular in magazines and books dealing with mentalism, one almost never sees such effects performed.

To the cynically minded an explanation for this phenomenon is not difficult to discover. It is unfortunately true that many people go into mentalism because they lack either the dexterity or willingness to practice which is necessary to most good magic, and feel that in mentalism they can get by with the knowledge of a few secrets or subtleties.

And, indeed, they often do 'get by'—just.

However, when they turn to billet work, they find that specter of hard work rising up again before them, and they quickly veer away to the latest push-button marvel that promises to do everything for them.

In all honesty it must be pointed out that this is not completely a bad thing. It is possible to make a career in mentalism and do a perfectly decent act without ever once doing billet effects—or, for that matter, any effects that require digital skills. Also—it will happen that people who come to mentalism from magic may tend to present billet effects as sleight-of-hand feats rather than mental tests—so in that sense, at least, it is perhaps better that not too many people attempt them.

It is also true that billet work demands more in the way of strong presentation than might other effects which possess stronger visual appeals. As with a lot of mentalism, there is no middle ground: either the performer is doing mental miracles—or tricks with little pieces of paper. The ability of the mentalist determines which of these perceptions the spectators take away with them.

Having said that, let me point out some positive aspects of billet work:

First...

...billes are *psychologically invisible*. By this I mean that—given convincing presentation—the bits of paper the performer uses do not seem crucial to the operation of the effect. They are only there as records of the thoughts of the performer or spectator, nothing more, and loom no larger in the minds of the audience than does the receipt slip in the bottom of a grocery bag to someone having a wonderful dinner.

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Related to this—we have all seen (and sometimes done) the following: asked to *"do a little something"* the mentalist graciously accedes to the request. Dipping into his pocket he comes up with something that no spectator has ever seen before. This can range from some inexcusable plastic monstrosity to a deck of ESP cards.

Please understand that I am not talking about a performer working in a formal close-up situation. Here ESP cards and such would not be out of place, since the performer's reason for being there is to demonstrate his or her powers; therefore, carrying the tools of the trade is perfectly reasonable.

However, the main *tool of the trade* is supposed to be the mentalist's *mind*—so in theoretically impromptu situations, it would seem that apparatus *as such* has no place.

Just about everyone carries a pad and pencil, though—and the presence of such items in your pocket will raise no eyebrows, even if you have gaffed them to do everything this side of a Bach fugue.

As to the question of whether it is *possible* to present billet effects to as great effect as with other program items, only a one-word answer is required:

FOGEL.

I have a particularly vivid memory of seeing Maurice Fogel lecture for the Magic Castle at the beginning of 1975; as part of that lecture he performed (but did not explain!) his three-billet test. The only props he used were a few slips of paper, chalkboard and chalk—and with those few items and thirty years' experience he had an audience of magicians on the edges of their chairs with excitement and wonder. This routine, together with his own version of the *Telephone Drama* from Annemann's COMPLETE ONE MAN MENTAL AND PSYCHIC ROUTINE¹, formed a major part of Fogel's act for many, many years, and clearly it demonstrates that billet work can be stunningly effective, when performed by a master.

The problem is that only one of us was Fogel. On the other hand, in many cases we won't be doing our billet work in the confines and to the requirements of a regular act, as Fogel did.

In what follows you will find a number of items that can be used within a regular act; if, however, you have no previous experience with billets, it is my recommendation that you work them in informal situations, until you are sure of your ability to present them in a do-or-die situation.

BILLET TECHNIQUE

Most mentalists, hearing the word *billet* think of one of two things—billet *switching*, or the *center-tear*. I will be giving handlings for both these techniques, but they are by no means the be-all and end-all of billet work.

¹Page 7.

SCRYPT

Switches suffer from a few drawbacks—one is that the spectators sometimes suspect that you 'fiddle' with the paper as you hold it and are somehow able to peek inside; often they think this regardless of what lengths you may go to trying to prove that this is not the case.

Another problem has to do with the mechanics of the switch itself; there are some people who simply cannot summon up the necessary digital skill, or whose hands are too dry and/or rough for the necessary moves. At the other end of this scale are those who can do such moves perfectly—except that it somehow looks just like that: moves.

I have provided a few switches herein; they have the advantage that they require very little digital skill, and do not have the appearance of moves.

The center-tear, in worthy service to mentalists since Dunninger first adapted this mediumistic technique in 1915, is a bit more of a problem; in spite of the vain hope to which a few performers cling, it is one effect that has been so thoroughly exposed as to be, in its original form, pretty near useless. (I have found a description of it in—among other places—a set of children's activity books aimed at the five-year-old with nothing to do on a rainy afternoon...!) Certainly there are many spectators who have never heard of this technique—but why take the chance?

There are, fortunately, a few ways around this hurdle as well, and those also will be described.

On the other hand, it doesn't pay to get *too* paranoid about all this; while I am a great believer in the 'fine points' of a presentation, the little subtle convincers that add the finishing touches to a mystery, I have discovered in many situations that angles which bothered me went right by the spectators.

For example, some years ago in *Magick*² I mentioned that the traditional method of folding a billet (once in the long direction and twice in the short direction) to end up with a folded paper rectangular in shape was an artificial way of going about it; that if you asked a spectator to fold a billet he'd fold it long-short-long and you would end up with a square billet. For some switching methods a billet of this shape is not easy to use, hence the artificial rectangular fold beloved of mentalists.

Well—from a *technical* point of view I was correct; a spectator *will* fold a billet into a square. However, it is also true that a spectator *will* notice nothing odd about a rectangular billet, and if handed a pre-creased billet will refold it as the performer desires.

(It is true that if you have to give a spectator specific instructions as to how to fold a billet, you had better have a logical reason for so doing; further on, in the *Double Routine*, I will give one approach to this problem.)

This is not to say there shouldn't be some thought given to this; if, for example, you use three pads of paper—each gaffed in a different way—it is

²No. 93, Bonus Insert; page 465.

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better if they are alike in appearance and you switch in and out as required, if only because most people don't carry around three different pads and would probably wonder why you do. Routining can help here too; if one effect requires the use of a pencil (a swami-gimmick effect, for example) and a later effect uses a ball-point pen, this can be handled by giving the pencil to a spectator to use in his part of the effect.

The same, of course, applies to other props. I once did a routine of effects involving four packets of envelopes; from the audience's point of view the same packet was in use through the entire routine.

The best approach by far—particularly when working in an impromptu situation—is to work entirely with borrowed materials. A number of effects to follow fall into this category.

SWITCHES

In Annemann's COMPLETE ONE MAN MENTAL AND PSYCHIC ROUTINE³ (and later in ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS⁴) two excellent switches are described; there is also useful information in Corinda's *Step Six* on billets in his THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM and in Malcolm Davison's section on handling billets in Ganson's MAGIC OF THE MIND⁵.

Aside from these, the only other important discussion is in C.L. Boarde's MAINLY MENTAL: VOL. ONE, an encyclopedic work on the subject which is, unfortunately, difficult to obtain.

Switches, in fact, are not absolutely essential to billet work; indeed, only a few of the following effects will use them at all.

However—doing my best not to repeat information in the above-named sources—let me provide here a few methods I've found useful.

HAND TO HAND NO. 1

I will describe two versions of this switch; the apparent action is the same in both. From the point of view of the spectators you are holding a folded billet in one hand and transfer it to the other and back as you search for something in your pocket (usually a paper-clip to secure the billet, but it can be any item logically connected with what you are doing).

In the first version you are holding the billet to be switched in your *right* hand and the dummy is in your *right* (jacket or trouser) pocket; paper-clip in the *left* pocket.

1. You apparently put the billet into your left hand but fingerpalm it in the right.

³Page 4.

⁴Page 11.

⁵Page 98.

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2. Your right hand goes into its pocket—apparently in search of the paper-clip—releases the fingerpalmed billet and takes the dummy in the same position.
3. Your right hand, supposedly empty, leaves the pocket—you did not find what you were searching for—and the left hand apparently replaces the billet it holds in the right.
4. The left hand goes into its pocket and comes out with the paper-clip.

HAND TO HAND NO. 2

In the second version the billet to be switched is again held in the right hand. The positions of the objects in the pocket are, however, reversed—i.e., the paper-clip is in the right-hand pocket and the dummy is in the left.

1. With the right hand holding the billet, the left goes into its pocket in search of the clip and fingerpalms the dummy.
2. As the left hand emerges from the pocket, apparently empty, the right hand approaches and seems to put its billet in the left hand; actually the billet is fingerpalmed in the right and the dummy displayed in the left.
3. The right hand goes into the pocket, releases the billet, and comes out with the paper-clip.

As will be evident from a trial, both of these ways of switching are extremely easy to do and make almost no demand on manual skill. The advantage of the first is that both billets are not 'out front' at the same time; the corresponding disadvantage is that the billet supposed to be in the left hand is out of the spectator's view for a time. In the second handling this is not the case, but both billets are in play at the same time. You'll have to decide which one suits you best.

It should be noted that, depending as they do on a specific motivation for their handling—the performer's search for the paper-clip—it is not a good idea to use these switches more than once in any given performance...

...unless you *enjoy* looking awkward.

PAD SWITCHES

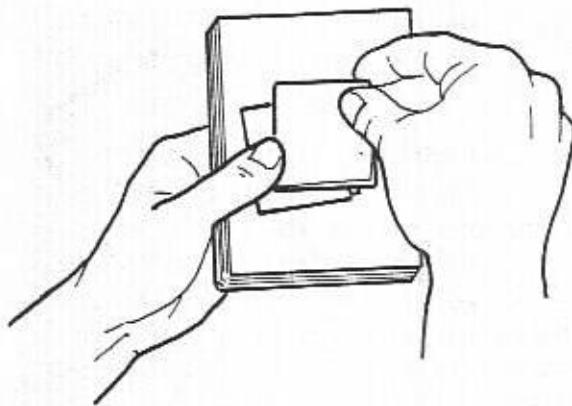
These are switches not of the pad, of course, but *with* it. Using a pad for cover simplifies many problems of switching.

The Takeaway

This may sound crude in description—indeed it is crude, or simple, in action—but in fact it is never noticed if competently done.

One hand holds the pad, with the folded dummy held by the thumb on the side away from the audience; the other hand has the billet to be switched

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As you talk, you simply bring the billet behind the pad, slide it under the thumb, and remove the dummy. The way you do this will depend on your personal style of movement; if, let us say, you move your hands around a lot, then something along the lines of a top change with cards might be advisable, with the hands only meeting long enough for the exchange to be made.

If you are more reserved, you might bring your hands together at chest height and hold them there as you lean forward to address a spectator; when your hands part the exchange has been made.

All that can be said of this technique is that if you don't attach any importance to it, neither will the audience.

The Tearaway

The only basic difference between this switch and the preceding one is that the action has a specific motivation.

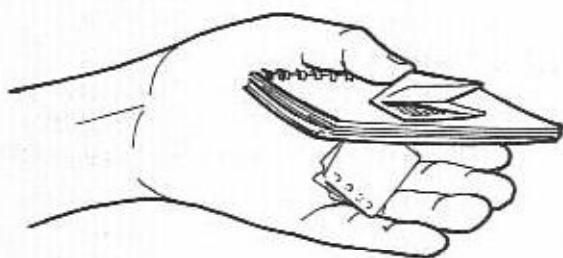
The apparent action in this one is that you are holding a billet in one hand and the pad in the other. The hand holding the billet goes to the pad and rips off a sheet which is handed to a spectator or otherwise used in the course of the effect; in this action the billet is switched.

The action is precisely the same as in *The Takeaway*, except that here the timing is not so critical because you have a reason for the hands to approach each other.

The Flipaway

Here the pad is held in the hand with the thumb crossing it diagonally at the upper corner; the dummy rests on the inner phalanges of the second and third fingers underneath the pad.

The billet to be switched is placed in the center of the pad's upper surface; the hand which held the billet then clears the table surface or performs some other action to make putting the billet on the pad logical.

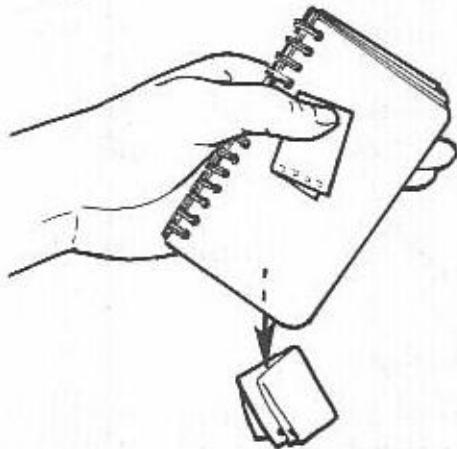


Apparently the billet is dumped from the pad to the table; actually, as the pad turns toward you, the thumb comes down and traps the billet against the pad while the dummy underneath the pad is allowed to fall.

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This is an *extremely* deceptive switch that can be done in nearly any circumstance; it has very few bad angles.

Note, too, that this can be used to switch out one of a *group* of billets collected on the pad—as for example to exchange one billet of several for a dummy as part of a one-ahead routine. (If the pad is large enough, and the billets of the proper ‘quiet’ paper, the stolen billet can be opened behind the pad; you can then proceed, using *The Takeaway*, to switch-and-read through the whole series of billets.)



Bill-ette

A convincing and simple divination of the serial number of a borrowed bill can be done as follows:

A folded bill rests underneath the pad; you have, of course, memorized its serial number.

Three spectators are asked to stand and remove one-dollar bills, folding them ‘green side out’ three times into small squares. These you collect on the pad.

Going to another spectator the bills are dumped in front of him; in this action one of the bills is switched for the one underneath the pad.

Using any simple equivoque—such as Annemann’s classic *pick-up-two-hand-me-one* force⁶—the memorized bill is forced, and the other two are returned to two of the spectators.

In going to your pocket for a pen you leave the bill—and then, making notes of your psychic impressions on the pad, proceed with the divination.

(Note: since three spectators are used, and none assumes he will get back his own bill, a switch of this sort is quite safe. Some bill-divination routines I have seen in print suggest the use of only one bill; I feel this is living dangerously since, if the spectator should happen to glance at the number on his bill before he folds it up, the effect is dead right there—unless you decide to change the presentation to the psychokinetic alteration of the number... “Gee, I dunno how I do this stuff!”)

MECHANICAL SWITCHES

The heading above does have a sort of clanking sound to it—but when I say *mechanical* I do not have in mind some elaborate board with clips, cords and pulleys.

⁶*The Jinx*, No. 2; Nov. 1934; page 8.

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Rather I have in mind approaches which depend on prepared material rather than sleight-of-hand methods.

Padded

Since we have just been discussing switches involving the use of a pad, let's continue with them for a moment:

In his MAINLY MENTAL: VOL. ONE, C.L. Boarde discusses a pad prepared by having a dot of wax on its underside.⁷ If the pad, together with a concealed dummy beneath it, is placed over a billet on the table so the wax comes into contact with the billet, the pad when later lifted will reveal the dummy while the original billet will be carried away under the pad.

This is a perfectly workable method with but one small problem; magician's wax—or beeswax—is not of uniform quality or consistency, and those who use it often know that it will many times pick up what it shouldn't (lint, for one example) and not pick up what it is supposed to, be it card or billet.

A piece of double-sided cellophane tape will partially solve this problem; it almost always picks up the billet.

However, usually once on the tape the billet is there to stay, and any attempt to remove it will result in the loss of a layer, at least, of the paper. For some routines this doesn't matter, but for those where the billet has to go back into play it is something of a problem.

The simple modern variation on this is to use a magnet set into the pad, about a quarter of the way from one end; the spectator clips his billet closed with a magnetic paper-clip, while the dummy you have underneath the pad is secured with a clip identical in appearance but *non-magnetic*. With this method the problems mentioned are eliminated.

(Actually—if you take care to keep the dummy well away from the area of the magnet, it is not necessary to use a non-magnetic clip; it is not, however, difficult to find such clips, and why take chances?)

Using this method, you actually have no need to rest the pad on the billet; the switch can be made as the hand holding the pad passes over the billet, releasing one and picking up the other.

This method and handling can also be used to greater effect with a pocket secretary which—because it is usually larger than the average pad—can accommodate a more powerful magnet.

(NOTE 1993: A simpler variation of this approach uses the stickum putty material available under many names from stationery stores. Its advantage is that it will peel away cleanly and holds well; the disadvantage is that it will sometimes peel away onto the wrong item—i.e., sticking to the billet instead of the pad or wallet. This can be controlled to some degree by using a paper with a glossy finish and a pad or wallet with a rough surface; the putty tends

⁷Page 19.

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to stick better to the rougher surface. Another approach is to have a thin sheet of the stickum exposed through a window cut in the pad; you will have to press down a bit more to secure the billet, but the stickum will not be drawn through the window when the billet is removed.)

Flipover Wallets

While the use of a Himber-type changing wallet to effect a switch is an obvious thought, there is a variation on this that I have not seen in print; here the idea is to use the wallet for only *half* the switch, as follows.

You are doing a prediction of some sort; let us say you are using one of the I.D. Case wallets. Having written your prediction and folded the paper, you place it into the pocket of the wallet and flip the wallet closed.

The selection having been made, you obtain the proper billet from an index (or, as in the case of Tanner's Six-Card Mental Test or a similar effect, the object itself).

Picking up the wallet, you flip it open and apparently extract the fingerpalmed billet from it, tossing the open wallet down on the table as you hand the billet to someone to read.

Here the wallet has been used simply to get rid of the dummy; you have opened it on its empty side. This can be done in reasonably convincing fashion with items as large as business cards or even playing cards; using this approach in combination with a Menetckel deck, for example, will provide you with a convincing card prediction. (Since this section is not concerned with card effects I will leave it to you to work out the details.)

STEALS

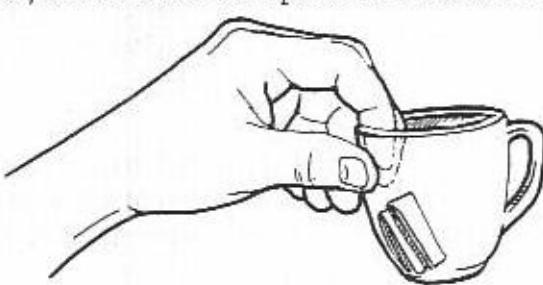
As mentioned in the first part of this monograph, it is not always necessary to use switches; in this section we will look at an alternate approach.

The most convenient way of differentiating *steals* from *switches* is to say that in a *switch* a replacement is made so that the spectators think the original billet is on view—while in a *steal* the billet is not on view but hidden from sight whether in or under something (in an envelope, under a book, for example), and actually has been stolen away.

Perhaps the best steal in print, and one not likely to be improved upon whether for convincing appearance or simplicity in working, is—not surprisingly—Annemann's.

It appeared in the aforementioned COMPLETE ONE MAN MENTAL AND PSYCHIC ROUTINE in an effect called *Telepathy Plus*⁸. The action was simply that you held out an (empty!) coffee cup and the spectator dropped the folded slip within. On the way back to the stage or to another spectator you simply scooped up the billet with your second finger and, when setting down the cup, retained the billet in a loose fingerpalm. (The drawings below show the secret action; the cup would of course be opaque, but is shown transparent to illustrate the move.)

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⁸Page 15.

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The strong point of this particular steal is that from the audience's point of view you appear never to touch the billet. A cup is mentioned, but obviously the steal can be done with any small smooth-sided container.

There have been other approaches to this sort of steal; in his *Do Not Touch* which appeared in *Abra*⁹, Jack Yates described an ingenious handling whereby a paper-clipped billet in a glass or cup was secretly removed by means of a magnet clipped in the fingers—the performer using the magnet to draw the billet up the side of the glass and into the palm.

These days, since the advent of the Emerson-West Kling Ring, this could be a very practical and useful handling.

Another classic handling for a steal—again Annemann's—incorporated the use of a thumb-tip;¹⁰ this was placed in the top of a pay envelope (a dummy billet rested at the bottom of the envelope) and the spectator's billet went into the tip, was stolen away on the thumb and the envelope was handed to the spectator to seal.

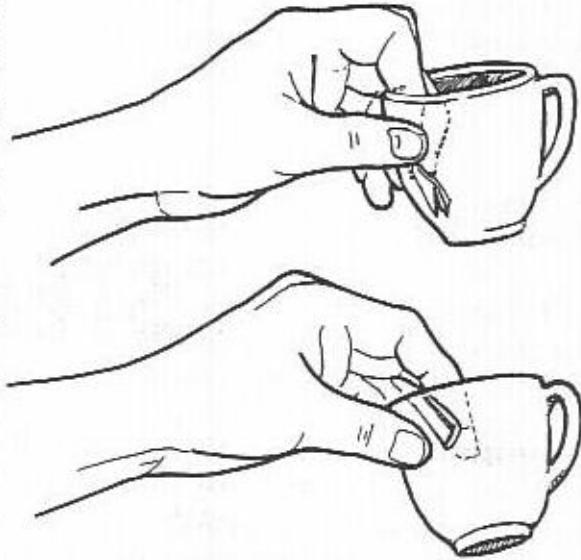
It should be noted, however, that extraneous materials are really not necessary for convincing steals. As long as there is a place where the billet can logically be placed, and where it is out of sight of the spectators, that is all, really, that's required.

To again return to the pad of paper, for example: you need only appear to place the billet beneath it—"where no one can see it," you say, making a virtue of necessity—and simply fingerpalm it. In doing this you do not (as writers on mentalism are so fond of saying) make a move of it, but simply draw the slip back into the fingers once it is out of view. This is so simple that it can hardly be called a sleight, and depends far more on your acting ability than on any manual skill.

Obviously, again, this can be applied in many ways: the billet can be placed under a book or wallet or plate, in a cup or glass (opaque, of course)—even (as I've done a few times) in your own breast pocket.

⁹Vol. 26, No. 658; Sept. 1958; page 119.

¹⁰ANNEMANN'S MENTAL BARGAIN EFFECTS, page 1.



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Later on I will give the working of one of my favorite billet routines—which I call *The Double Routine*—and, as you will note, it uses a simple steal of the type indicated above and no ‘billet switching’ as such.

There may be billet routines you’ve passed over because they require a switch. You might consider going back over them to see if a steal might be used instead, and thus simplify the working.

CENTER-TEAR

As I mentioned earlier, a problem with the technique of the *center-tear* is that it has been repeatedly exposed, since it is one of the few mental secrets that can be revealed in one or two illustrations and thus—like a picture showing the workings of a levitation gimmick—does not require any involved thought process on the part of the audience in order to be understood.

Over the years mentalists have become painfully aware of this, and there have been several approaches aimed at disguising the methodology by psychology or physical means.

An example of the *psychological* approach is the brilliant idea of twice-written thoughts first described by Bob Somerfeld in his *MIND READER'S DIGEST*¹¹; you request the spectator to think of a movie he's seen and write it in the circle (I prefer to draw a bordered square in the center of the paper and tell the spectator to "...imagine it's the marquee"), then fold it once each way as usual. Then you take the billet, hold it to your forehead and fail to get an impression. You ask the spectator to write it again, this time with the name of the lead actor.

As the spectator busies himself about this task you casually tear up the original billet, executing the torn center as usual. Later, you divine the name of the lead actor or actress *first*—as Somerfeld points out, the spectator is still hanging onto the slip with this new information, and you've never touched it.

A related approach was that of Annemann again, with Al Baker and Dr. Jacob Daley; in their *Notaria*¹² a handling is described where, in demonstrating to the spectator how to destroy a billet (the contents of which have been forced and thus are known to you), you take a billet from the other of the two spectators involved and tear it up—doing the torn center move in the process.

¹¹Page 6.

¹²*The Jinx*, No. 27; Dec. 1936; page 165.

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The *physical* approach began with Al Baker, who in his MENTAL MAGIC¹³ described a method of doing the tear so that the information could be gleaned *during the process*—instead of later on, as had been the case up to that time.

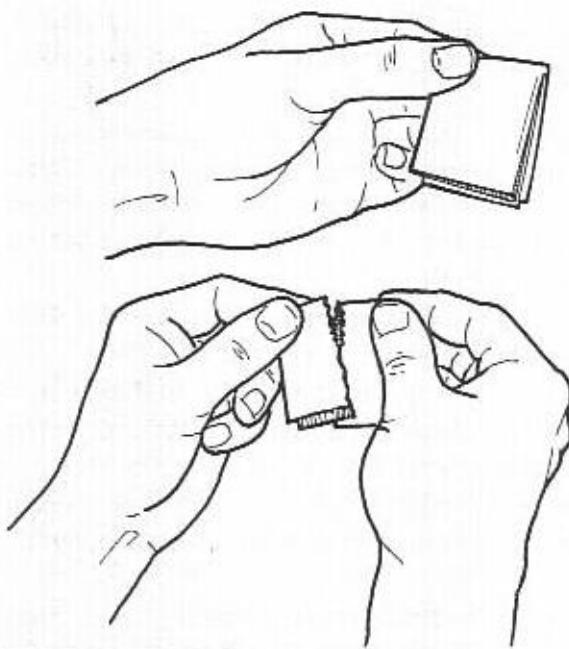
Nothing much happened until the 1970's, when Al Mann began publishing his intriguing mental manuscripts. Among these were center-tear handlings involving a peek during the process of the tear; these went by such names as the *Improvisor*¹⁴, the *Mag-Eye Move*¹⁵, and the *Osterlind Ultimate Center Tear*¹⁶. (Richard Osterlind later published a full book on his handling, titled THE SURROUNDED SLOW-MOTION CENTER TEAR... AND OTHER TECHNIQUES.)

Other recent versions include Bruce Bernstein's BERNSTEIN CENTER TEAR TECHNIQUE and Richard Stride's SCATTER THOUGHT; also Ray Hyman's *The Eccentric Tear*¹⁷.

Never one to shirk a challenge, I now present my own variation, pausing only to stress that it is a variation, nothing more, falling somewhere between the Bernstein and Osterlind techniques.

Those who have had trouble mastering the above-mentioned methods might like to give this a try to see if it works a little better for them.

The spectator has written something in a central circle on a small piece of paper, and then folded the paper once each way.



1. You take the slip in your left hand so that the folded center is under your left thumb, and the single fold of the paper is horizontal at the top.

2. The slip is torn in half vertically; the loose pieces in the right hand are placed, from your perspective, in front of those in the left.

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¹³Page 10.

¹⁴Mann's APODOSIS, page 7; also his KOLOPHON, page 18.

¹⁵Mann's PHANTA-GRAFS, page 13.

¹⁶THE APODOSIS, page 17.

¹⁷Linking Ring, Vol. 66, No. 10; Oct. 1986; page 73.

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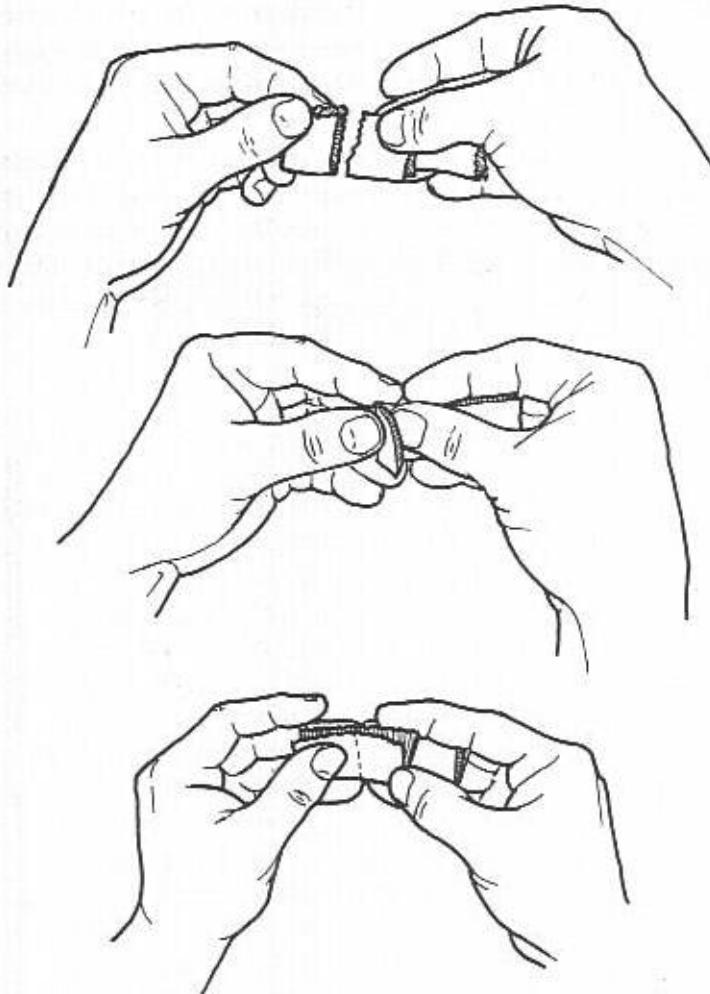
3. The pieces are now rotated ninety degrees counterclockwise, so that the center section is to the left and at the rear of the packet of pieces. As the right hand comes over to make the second tear, the front piece is moved to the right (concealed by the right fingers) and the rear piece is torn in half again and the pieces are carried away by the right hand.
4. The position now is that the center section alone remains in the left hand. It rests against the pad of the second finger and is clipped at top and bottom edges by the first and third fingers. The thumb draws back slightly on the outer surface and then releases it; the effect of this will be that the outer half of the piece will spring outward slightly.
5. The right hand returns and the piece in the left hand is placed into it—but while the pieces are apparently held between the right thumb and fingers, the near half of the center piece goes *behind* the right thumb, and is forced halfway open. The right fingers are turned inward slightly to conceal this from view.
6. The left hand moves away to gesture as the performer makes some comment. The left-hand edge of the center is even with the edges of the torn pieces, so all looks innocent.
7. The left hand returns to the right; the left thumb touches the section of the center behind the right thumb and opens it out fully; by applying a bit of pull-back pressure here the left thumb can spread the halves of the *second* fold.
8. You ask for an ashtray or some such thing; this provides misdirection to open the second fold halfway (all that is necessary for the glimpse). If you have not been able to open the center fully at this point you have the option of tearing the front group of pieces *again*—then you continue the opening procedure and the information is noted.
9. This done, you continue tearing the paper into small fragments and drop them into the ashtray.

As with all billet work—including that which you will find in this book—you're going to have to spend quite a bit of time with papers in hand to get the technique down to where it looks like natural movement.

In *OMNIMANCYI* I made mention of a performer, a 'scope worker', who made a very good living using nothing but the center tear. A point in handling which he stressed is worth repeating here:

The tearing *must* appear *casual*—it must not look like a studied, worked out procedure. The best way to create this effect is by an application of an acting technique related to sense memory; what you must do is to recall the last time you tore up a note, an old grocery list, or some other such item when you were clearing a table or desk. You didn't tear the paper up in some careful pattern, you didn't hold it up on display, you didn't look at it as you tore it up—you simply disposed of something, garbage, which was of no further

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importance. *That* is what has to be going on in your mind in order to make the tear play as real and ordinary...

...and it is also the reason why, whatever technique you choose to employ, you must practice it until it is more than second nature, until the moves are so automatic that you can do them without any conscious thought whatever. *If you were really tearing up a piece of paper you wouldn't have to think about it.*

On that '*holding it up on display*' business:

This is worth special and separate mention only because it is perhaps the most common flaw I have personally observed in witnessing performances of the center-tear. The performer held the paper out in front of him at chest height and made a great point of showing that he was actually tearing up the paper.

Such handling would perhaps be appropriate if the performer were planning to *restore* the paper—but presumably he is doing a *mental* effect, which

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is quite a different thing from a paper-tearing trick. In the context of a mental effect the performer does not have to *prove* he is destroying the paper; indeed, it is often advisable for him to appear to be doing so absent-mindedly, unconscious of what his hands are doing.

Consider: if the spectator was going to dispose of a small folded piece of paper, he'd probably just crumple it up and throw it away. Well—you *have* to tear up the paper in order to cop the center, but the spectator isn't aware of that unless you do something to bring it to his attention, like holding it in front of his nose while you do the tear. At worst this action will make him suspicious; at best he is liable to think you're a trifle peculiar.

THE OCCULTEAR

I will give this subsection the above title because it concerns itself with a tear technique which is *occulted*—hidden—in such a way that often the spectator is not aware the paper has been torn at all; when tearing of the paper is done openly, the center has been acquired long before.

Ron Baillie's UNIVERSAL MIND routine, published in 1952, described a two-handed move to secretly obtain the center section of a long rectangular billet; in this handling, part of an excellent routine, spectators were never aware that a piece of the paper had been stolen. The torn end was concealed under the edge of a book or in other such ways which prevented the spectators from noting that a section was missing.

Some years later in *Step Six: Billets* of Corinda's THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, Al Koran described a one-handed version of the move, shown to him by Jack Avis.¹⁸ Though it attracted some mild interest when first published, the Avis move never seemed to catch on, perhaps because a number of necessary technical points could only be learned through experimentation. I know of at least a few people who told me flatly that the move was "impossible to do"—and doubtless this was the reaction of others whose preliminary trials met with failure.

It is, in fact, far from impossible, or even difficult, given the *correct preparation and materials*. Indeed, once mastered, it is one of the most useful and convincing moves in the entire range of billet work—and it is this move alone with which this section will deal.

Before we get into the actual technique of the tear, there are some preliminaries to be discussed—the writing materials, the area of writing involved, and the folding technique.

¹⁸Page 171.

Writing Materials

A piece of paper about three inches by five inches is used; this is a standard pad size, and I am going to suggest two specific kinds of pads to be used. The first is a type widely available in variety stores, usually called a *Rainbow* pad or something similar; it actually consists of five pads of various colors packaged together, and the paper itself is a cheap pulp.

The second kind—which requires a few niceties of handling to be discussed further on—is a *side-opening* spiral-bound notebook, with ruled lines.

Both these pads are available in the recommended three-by-five-inch size.

(NOTE 1993: manufacture and composition of these pulp paper pads may vary, depending on time and type of the manufacturing process. Check to make sure the paper tears easily.)

I specify these pads for a reason: unless you have exceptional strength in your fingers, attempting the move with a high-quality bond paper with machine-cut edges will result in failure, or close to it—the move will be almost impossible to do. This is what I mean by the importance of correct materials. For purposes of discussion I will assume you've acquired a Rainbow pad; we will deal with the spiral pad later.

The only point that needs to be mentioned regarding the writing implement is that it should be a pencil or ball-point pen; an ink pen or marker-style pen can't be used, because with this type of paper it will bleed right through to the other side.

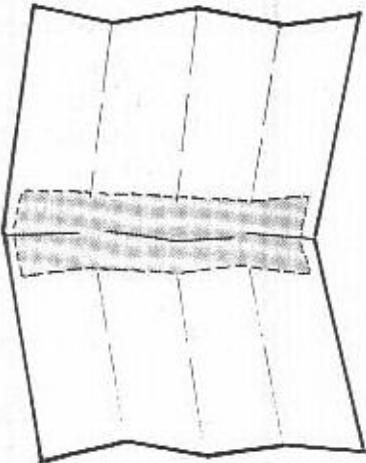
The Area of Writing

You have to confine the spectator's writing to a central section of the paper across the width—an area about one-and-a-half inches by three inches, as indicated in the illustration.

It doesn't really matter which way the spectator does his writing—across the width or across the length—as long as it takes place in this central area.

How you confine the spectator to this area will depend largely on your presentation. You might cover the rest of the sheet with astrological calculations or numerological doodles. You might sign the paper at one end and have the spectator sign it at the other (as suggested by Corinda). Baillie's UNIVERSAL MIND manuscript, previously mentioned, has a logical justification for limiting the writing area, wedded very specifically to the presentation provided.

Other approaches would include my previously mentioned suggestion of drawing a theatre marquee and having the spectator think of a movie he's seen recently; similarly, you might draw a picture of a book.



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Still another way would be the use of a preprinted pad, with instructions at both ends and the center-section blank.

In any case—by one of the means here suggested or one adapted to your own particular *mise en scène*, the spectator's writing goes into the center area.

The Fold

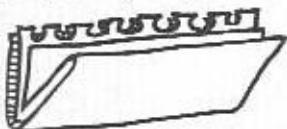
If the pulp paper I've suggested is used, a straightforward folding in half once the long way and twice the short way to produce a folded slip three-quarters of an inch by two-and-a-half inches will work fine.

If that type of paper is not available and you must use the spiral pad sheet, you must employ a more precise technique of folding; this technique can be used with any piece of paper of this approximate size—as long as at least *one* of the long edges is not machine-cut, but rather is rough or unfinished. In tearing the sheet from the spiral pad we create that rough edge.

As you talk to the spectator, telling him what you intend to do in general terms, you fold and reopen the paper by way of illustration. This is done in the following manner.

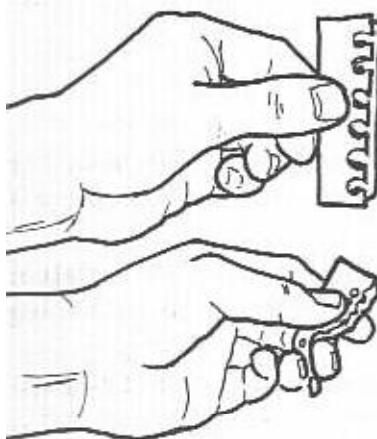
(Note: I describe this for a tear done by the left hand; reverse the directions where applicable if you wish to use your right—though in fact it is best to be able to do the tear with either hand.)

Hold the paper with the smooth long edge to your right and the rough torn edge to your left. The bottom edge is brought upward as the paper is folded in half, now roughly in a square shape. Turn it so the fold is to your left and again bring up the (new) bottom edge, so you have folded it once each way. *The paper is not folded perfectly.*



Let the rough edge project about an eighth of an inch. The paper is folded again in this same direction but this time is brought up even with the rough edge.

The above method of folding is very important because the rough edge will give a start to the tear which makes it much easier of execution. This handling of the rough edge holds true for any type of paper.



The Tear

The spectator has written on the billet and folded it, handing it back to you.

The billet is taken between the left thumb and forefinger slightly above the middle. The rough edge is next to the thumb, and is on the right; the center section, to be stolen, is below the point where the billet is held.

The second finger comes up and rests beside the first, just below it on the billet; the third, or ring, finger is moved up to rest on the other side of the billet, slightly below the thumb.

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The thumb and forefinger grip the billet firmly; the second and third fingers, also with a firm grip, curl back into the palm, ripping off the center as they go.

In doing this, most of the pressure should come from the third finger at the outer edge; once the tear is begun it can be completed without difficulty.

As soon as the center is lodged safely in the palm, the fingers straighten out again, concealing the fact that the lower portion of the slip is missing.

You can then transfer the upper half of the billet (apparently, of course, the whole slip) to your other hand, secretly retaining the lower half.

It will take a few trials, possibly, before the knack comes. Once you have acquired this with the paper suggested, you may find that you can execute the move with other types and weights of paper. To *learn* the move, however, I must again stress that you use the pulp paper pad.

You will appreciate that as no dummy or other get-ready is necessary, the one-hand tear can be used very effectively in impromptu situations. There should, however, be a set pattern to the routine.

ROUTINE NO. 1

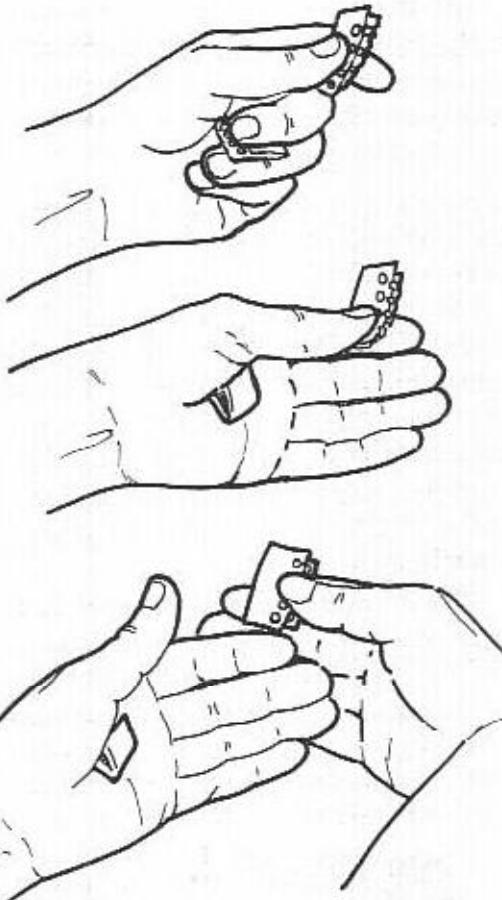
(Close-up)

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The spectator has been asked to write a question concerning his or her future. When the folded billet is returned to you, you immediately place it on the table.

Taking the ball-point pen (or pencil), you write the spectator's initials at the top of the slip—the part that will remain after the other end, containing the center, is stolen away.

Turning the billet over, you draw a small dot with an oval around it on the new surface, also at the top of the slip.



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The left hand then picks up the billet in position for the tear. Bring the right hand over to the left, and as the right thumb and forefinger close on the (upper) section of the billet the tear is executed. The right fingers screen the maneuver. The right hand now holds the visible upper half of the billet as the left hand goes to the left jacket pocket for the pad or notebook, dropping the center in the lap on the way. The notebook is placed on the table and opened, and a large circle and dot, similar to the one the spectator can see on the portion of the billet projecting from your hand, is drawn on the paper. The left hand puts the ball-point away in the jacket pocket and, coming out, rests naturally in your lap. You open the center as you talk.

Your spiel is to the effect that the two circles act somewhat like crystals, as transmitter and receiver; the spectator is asked to stare at the circle on the billet, which you are holding in (apparently) full view.

You, at this point, seem to stare at and concentrate on the circle drawn on the notebook. Actually you are staring down past it and reading the center which lies open in your lap. It is impossible for the spectator to tell that you are not looking at the pad.

(Note: *always* look at the slip in your lap, never at the circle on the pad; the spectator cannot detect the direction of your gaze, but *can* detect a shift in your glance that will be a giveaway.)

You get the information and refold the center. As you do, you talk about fields of vibrational force, the collective unconscious, or what have you—but finally with a sigh you give up and say that clairvoyant vibrations seem to be throwing you off—explaining that clairvoyance is *object-sensing*, the object in this case being the billet.

You say, with a slight hint of apology, that you will have to try telepathy; for that, of course, the billet must be destroyed.

Apparently you rip the billet in half; actually you have brought up the refolded center in a loose fingerclip and torn it and the visible section of the billet together. You place the pieces together and tear once more, then hand them to the spectator to dispose of in an ashtray. If by chance he or she is the suspicious type, and checks them later, everything is in order.

Now, of course, you are in possession of the information—the billet is out of the way—and all evidence of any chicanery is gone. You can answer the question by whatever mode you choose, be it astrology, numerology, necromancy... or *Bisha*.

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ROUTINE NO. 2 (Close-up)

This is more of a 'handling' than a routine, and was suggested by a method involving a switched billet which appeared in Boarde's MAINLY MENTAL: VOL. ONE.¹⁹

¹⁹See Question And Answer, Variation C on page 78.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

It requires that the performer and spectator—or client—be alone, as for example in a fortunetelling booth. Also required is a crystal ball.

After the writing as usual, you have the spectator initial the billet at the top end by the simple expedient of covering the rest of the area with your finger as you hold the billet in place on the table.

You then get up from your chair, executing the tear, and walk around to the spectator's side of the table, transferring the upper section of the billet to your other hand.

You hold the billet against the spectator's forehead, permitting a casual glance at the initials. Your other hand, meanwhile, behind the spectator's back, opens the stolen section, and you glimpse the information. This must, of course, be done *quietly*.

As you do this, instruct the spectator to gaze into the crystal and visualize his question.

From here on the handling is similar to the first routine—the billet is destroyed and an answer given.

Note: the crystal, of course, is not absolutely necessary; you can use a burning candle or incense cone or, as do some East Indian seers, a saucer filled with black ink.

VARIANT ROUTINE

Here we move from mentalism to the psychic, since apparent spirit-writing is involved.

Acquire a Dobrin-type Double-Locking Addition Slate (this is the kind with a flap much like a changing card; this flap can be locked at either end, in either position. The standard addition slate, sometimes called a Dunninger Slate, is not suitable for this routine).

The only preparation is to write an answer to any question, and then to turn the flap so that this answer is hidden.

Assuming that, by one of the two previous handlings, you have acquired knowledge of the spectator's question, you pick up the slate, casually showing it blank, and say you will attempt an answer by automatic writing.

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With proper dramatics you write a direct answer to their question; you do not, however, let them see this, but work the flap to expose the other answer, which is shown to the spectator. He denies it has any relevance.

You erase this answer and suggest he hold the slate over his head—perhaps the spirits can succeed where you have failed. Of course by the time you put it on his head, you have worked the flap; when, eventually, he takes it down, he finds a direct answer to his question.

(Credit Note: this is, of course, only a mechanical slate version of a classic office slate test, described by Abbott and Carrington among others.)

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ROUTINE NO. 3 (*Stage*)

For this the following articles are required:

- two billets, folded for the tear
- a large bulldog clip
- a stand from which the clip may be displayed
- side-opening spiral notebook and ball-point pen

The clip and stand are placed on your table; the notebook in left jacket pocket, with one billet; the other billet in your right jacket pocket.

One billet is removed from the right jacket pocket and handed to a spectator with the request that a name be written on it of some famous artist (author, composer, etc.) of times past. (I don't recommend a question as the center might take too long to read.)

The spectator writes the name, folds the slip and hands it back to you.

As you mention you'll place the billet in the clip, you perform the tear as your other hand picks up the bulldog clip from the table. The billet is placed in the clip so that the torn end is just inside the jaws—the rest of the billet projecting out from the jaws—and the clip is hung on the stand.

Your left hand (which we will presume is the one with the center) goes to your pocket, opens the center against the notebook, and brings the notebook out. (You should, of course, be talking during this, to cover the slight stall while you perform the action in your pocket.) A glimpse gets the information, and then the cover of the notebook is folded around against the back, completely concealing the center.

You write the name you glimpsed on a page of the notebook; tearing it off you crumple it and hand it to the spectator, telling her to hold it for a moment.

The notebook is replaced in the pocket where the other billet rests; this billet is fingerpalmed.

You remove the bulldog clip from the stand and hold it jaws upward. The other hand, with the fingerpalmed billet approaches; you press the clip open and let the torn piece of the original billet simply *drop into the clip*, where the pressure of the sides keeps it safe and secure. The fingerpalmed billet is brought into view and the clip is tossed onto the table.

You now open the billet and apparently read off what the spectator wrote. (Note: it's a good idea to have a name actually written on this billet in case there happens to be some light behind you.) You crush the billet and ask the spectator to read what you wrote. As she does you pocket the dummy.

Finis.

VARIANT ROUTINE (with Dobrin slate)

For larger groups:

In this version, after the billet has been placed in the clip the hand goes to the pocket, partially opens the billet and retains it in the palm, then comes out with a stick of chalk.

Picking up the Dobrin slate, you open the center behind it and the information is noted. You make a few scrawls on the slate and then, as you pause to make a comment to the spectator, you work the flap—which swings over and conceals the center which has been lying against the slate surface.

You now write the name on the slate and hand it to a spectator to hold, writing side down, on his lap. In putting away the chalk the dummy billet is obtained and the routine concluded as before.

TRITON

In Peter Warlock's *Pentagram*²⁰ a billet routine was described by Jack Avis; it was called *Chronokinesis* (which means *movement through time*) and was an intriguing version of the Baker-Vernon concept where a torn center is made to pass as a prediction.²¹

Adding a gimmick, I have come up with the following.

A bulldog clip is shown which holds three small folded slips—one each of *red, white* and *blue*. You say that you're pretty good at determining specific choices a spectator might make, but not the general categories, so you've made three predictions.

The spectator is handed a slip of white paper and asked to write down the name of any *object*—it can be *animal, vegetable* or *mineral*. He does so and folds up the slip, which you place in another bulldog clip and display. Taking the clip holding the three predictions, you squeeze it over another spectator's hand and the papers drop onto his palm. The spectator who wrote on the slip is asked to announce the chosen category; let us suppose the answer is "Mineral."

"*You didn't choose animal,*" you say taking the red slip and pocketing it, "*and you didn't choose vegetable.*" The blue slip is likewise pocketed. "*But mineral.*" You open up the white slip, glance at it, and hand it to the spectator who's been holding the slips, requesting that it not be read yet.

"*In fact,*" you say, going back to the spectator's slip in the other clip, removing it and opening it, "*you chose—coal.*" Turning to the other spectator you say, "*And what mineral did I predict?*"

²⁰Vol. 8, No. 4; January 1954; page 25.

²¹It should be noted that Avis used his one-handed tear technique in that routine, though it was not indicated in the write-up.

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When the slip is read it is found to say, "*Coal.*"

The working should be fairly obvious. The bulldog clip in which the three predictions are shown is of the Ostin, Thornton, Bergson-Nelson or Laub-Inglese kind, where the dummy billet is drawn into the clip when the jaws are opened—by elastic, spring or gravitic motive power. In the application here, the clip is prepared to move the *white* slip up out of sight when the jaws of the clip are opened. The three slips are made by folding a piece of paper of each color as for the one-hand tear, executing the tear, and putting these three center sections in the clip as your predictions; all are blank.

When the spectator's slip is placed in the other clip the center is stolen; this is dropped, along with the red and blue pieces, into the other spectator's hand, while the original white prediction slip goes up into the clip.

Handling is as indicated in the effect description; you simply open and read the white center-piece as you talk, so that you'll be able to misread the dummy you apparently take from the other clip (as indicated in previous routines.)

If you are a fanatic about such things, you can always have duplicate sets of dummy red and blue prediction slips in your pocket, made out in the various animal-vegetable-mineral combinations—so that later you can take these out and leave them behind. I personally doubt that it is worth the trouble.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Spend some time playing around with the basic move and I think you will agree that it can become a very valuable part of your repertoire. Some advantages have been noted, and you will discover others as you work with it.

It should be noted that there are all sorts of ways of concealing the torn end of the billet; under the edge of a book or similar-sized object, in a button-hole, projecting from a handkerchief pocket, etc. It can be fairly placed into an envelope, the spectator pushing it home and noting his initials as he does so (in most applications it is worthwhile to have the billet initialed.) You can even set the torn end alight and, once it is burning merrily, hand the slip to the spectator for disposal. He won't be able to tell just how much has actually burned away.

THE DOUBLE ROUTINE

This is, in fact, a series of routines, all based on the same general handling. For the most part they use one of two hidden gimmicks—a pocket billet index or a pocket-writer.

I am not going to describe a billet index here; such things are well and completely covered in the relevant sections in ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS²² and Corinda's THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM²³. I use the kind described by Annemann, although a billet-size version of the Corinda-Page Q.5 Index would also work fine.

A pocket-writer need not be anything elaborate; it is, after all, only something to hold a piece of paper in position to write in your pocket. It can be as simple as a piece of cardboard with a couple of rubber bands snapped around it—or something a bit more sophisticated, holding the slip in position with photo-mounting corners or within a narrow cardboard frame. The one provided with the Jack Avis *Message From Hades* effect is excellent; a description of the gimmick (and the excellent effect) will be found in THE TARBELL COURSE IN MAGIC, VOL. 6²⁴.

For the pocket-writing implement I suggest a stubby ball-point pen. Try to find one that has a full-size big brother with matching ink; the larger pen is used openly in the course of the routines.

²²Page 78.

²³Page 88.

²⁴Page 222.

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NO. 1: GREAT MINDS STILL THINK ALIKE

Preparation for this routine is fairly simple. We will assume that you are going to use the side-opening spiral notebook previously described. Tear a sheet from the notebook; tear this in turn into two equal pieces; discard the bottom half and fold the other piece once in one direction and twice in the other. Open it out and place it in the pocket-writing holder.

The short pen is alongside the writer in the pocket; a small container, such as a coffee cup, is also handy.

Presentation and working is as follows:

A spectator is asked to assist. You take out the notebook and tear out a sheet of paper. You tear the slip in half and hand the *lower* half to the spectator along with the (full-size) ball-point pen. Ask him to visualize a three-digit number and write it on the paper.

You reclaim the pen and put it aside. Picking up the other half of the piece of paper, you say, "*Look—I want you to fold it up like this, so no one can see it,*" and you demonstrate by folding your piece in one direction and twice the other way. This done, you pocket your billet.

You pick up the coffee cup and have the spectator drop his folded slip inside. In setting the cup aside you cop out the spectator's billet as described on page 163; it is a very simple thing, hardly a move at all.

"You have a number in your mind—I have one in mine as well." Here the hand containing the fingerpalmed billet goes into the pocket, pushes the billet to the fingertips, and brings it out. This is presumably the billet you used to demonstrate the folding; actually, of course it is the spectator's billet.

You unfold it, and while apparently writing down a number (screening the billet from the spectator's view, of course) you note the number he wrote down.

POINT ONE: In the interests of grace, you should use the same hand to pocket the demonstration billet and to cop the spectator's billet—otherwise you'd be in the position of having to reach into one jacket pocket with the opposite hand, which might look a shade peculiar...

POINT TWO: If, when you open the supposedly blank slip and look at the spectator's writing, you find it upside-down, then *read it upside-down*; don't turn it around or otherwise adjust it, for such an action would be a dead giveaway.

Having simulated writing a number, refold the billet and drop it in the cup. You pick up the notebook, and as you ask the spectator if he has any idea what you wrote, you put the notebook in your pocket behind the pocket-writer and pick up the short pen.

The spectator is asked to name any three-digit number; when he does you affect surprise and say, "*That's quite good, let's see how I do.*" As you patter toward your revelation of the spectator's number you pocket-write the number he just named.

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Dropping the pen, you extract the billet from the holder and fold it. As you are finishing with your naming of the spectator's number your hand comes out of the pocket. The spectator admits your guess is correct.

You say, "Let's check." You hand him the cup and in the act of doing so, let the fingerpalmed billet drop in.

Once more ask him what number he named; the billets are opened and the effect is over.



Technical divertissement: the astute student will have noted that while the two halves shown at the finish make up a complete notebook sheet, they are not two halves of the *same* notebook sheet.

I have never had anyone notice this—but if it bothers you, it is possible to develop a handling where the original half is concealed in the notebook and switched out, so that the spectator gets the bottom half that goes with the piece set in your pocket-writer. There are two or three possible approaches to this, and I leave it to you to come up with the ones you like the best. Please note, however, that such niceties are really not necessary; if it bothers you that much, then as soon as the effect has been absorbed and appreciated, tear up both slips and relax...

...and if you're still brooding about the mismatch being noticed, try this handling, inspired by *Triposte* (described earlier on page 59):

Tear out the top half of a leaf from the notebook, leaving *the bottom half bound in*; set up this top half in your pocket-writer.

In doing the routine, tear off the top half of the full sheet immediately under the half-sheet. Place this on the table and now simply tear out the upper of the two bottom half-sheets and place it beside the upper half on the table.

In doing this, you don't let the spectator peer into the notebook—and of course the tears must be in the same place on both sheets; but since you have the torn edge of the half-sheet right there to guide you, this should present no problem.

182 | In the effects using the index there's obviously no way to get an exact match—but, really, one torn half-sheet looks pretty much like any other, if you make a reasonably neat job of it.



Such is the basic routine. As you will appreciate, it can be performed for one person or a group, sitting or standing, under almost any conditions. As noted in the subsection on *STEALS*, the cup is not a necessity; a book, handkerchief, anything can be used which puts the billets out of sight.

You will also note that the above is presented as a dual-telepathy routine. An equally effective routine, with exactly the same handling, is that of

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telepathy and prediction. An example of this immediately follows; it is, in fact, my personal favorite.

NO. 2: ON THE WIRED THOUGHT

A spectator is asked to think of someone who can be reached by phone *now*, and note down the name of the person on a slip of paper. This is placed in a coffee cup for safekeeping (!).

You then say you will make a note of something concerning that person, which you do, dropping your slip into the cup along with the first.

The spectator dials the number; when the phone begins to ring you take the receiver, and when it is answered you ask to speak to the person *by name*.

You explain to the party at the other end of the line that her friend was thinking of her; you hope you haven't bothered her and wonder if she'd like to try a further test.

Handing the phone back to the spectator, tell him to ask his friend to name a year in the past twenty-five that has been important to her. Ask the spectator to repeat it for the other people in the room. You hand him the cup and he opens the slips, to find your prophecy is correct!

The working here is exactly the same as in the first effect, although because of the limitation to twenty-five possibilities for the choice, the pocket-writer can be dispensed with and the billet index employed.

This is, in fact, a combination of two Annemann effects, *On The Wire* and *Wired Thought*²⁵, put together here as a logical and cohesive routine.

As will be clear, the basic routine is susceptible to a great number of variations and to list them all would be impractical at best. However:

NO. 3: THE PREDICTION READING

For one person only—they write a question and place it in a small brass bowl. Without comment, you write something and place it in the bowl as well. In the course of the reading you divine the question and when your paper is opened at the conclusion of the reading it bears advice or information directly concerned with the question!

For this you use the billet index—with twenty-six answers you can cover thirteen basic categories with both positive and negative responses, which should be more than sufficient.

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NO. 4: CARD READING

Similar to the above but in this case you lay out a pattern of cards, Tarot or regular, after the sitter has thoroughly shuffled the deck; the last card is her lucky card and is left face down. If it is the one you noted down then her wish will come true. The deck is marked, and you use the pocket-writer.

²⁵ ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, pages 33 and 35 respectively.

NO. 5: NAME COINCIDENCE

The spectator writes the name of someone important to her—first name only—and you do the same. When the slips are opened by a third spectator they are identical.

This can, of course, be used as a handling for any coincidence presentation; done with numbers it is a good repeat routine for those who have seen you do the *Punx Test*²⁶.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

For anything more than numbers, initials or *very brief* messages an index is to be recommended over the pocket-writer for ease in working.

It is, of course, possible to vary the handling by leaving *your* billet out on the table at the beginning, and then switching in the spectator's billet you've copped—but this is only worth the trouble if you're performing this for magicians—and why would you be doing that?

In the first effect it is perhaps advisable to let the spectator be slightly off in her guess—or you might have her get the numbers in reverse—“*You were facing me, miss, so I suppose you got a mirror-image of my thought...*”

Always make sure the spectator gets the correct half of the paper at the beginning; otherwise you will be in trouble.



GEOMETEAR

I will begin by freely admitting that all that's new here is the combination of concepts and a few touches on the handling, blended to create a nice and logical impromptu billet routine demonstrating telepathy and clairvoyance.

You are asked to demonstrate your doubtless wondrous powers. Graciously acceding to the request, you take two small slips of paper and on one you draw a circle, while on the other you draw a square.

As you do so you comment that while anything of a material nature must, in the course of things, eventually perish, concepts do not; that while a specific example of a circle—a child's hoop, let us say—is an object which must eventually come to dust, the *idea* of a circle is something which cannot be destroyed. The same is, of course, true of thoughts; while the physical record of a thought may be destroyed, the thought itself lives on.

To illustrate, you ask the spectator to write on each slip—in the circle and on the square—the name of a *physical object*. This done, he is to fold them once each way and then mix them so that even he does not know which is which.

²⁶Corinda's THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, page 192.

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This done, the slips are placed on the table and the spectator is asked to choose one for the telepathy test; the other slip, you explain, will be used in a test of clairvoyance. The spectator chooses a slip and you tear it up, explaining that in a test of telepathy no physical object—in this case the paper—is used; you'll get back to it in a moment but first you will attempt the clairvoyant test, i.e., determining what is on the remaining slip.

With suitable dramatics you finally say, "Ship—ship—that's the image I get..." Opening the slip you read what the spectator has written, announcing aloud, "...yacht...well, close enough, don't you think? I did get the idea you had in mind."

You tear up the slip you hold, dropping it on the bits of the other slip still on the table.

Then you proceed with the telepathy test, gradually building up a mental picture which you verbally describe and which is verified as correct by the spectator.

This is, obviously enough, simply a combination of the one-ahead and center-tear principles, but there are a few points which should be examined.

You prefold both slips as you talk to be sure they will be identical in appearance, since it is essential that the spectator not be able to tell them apart. For the same reasons you are careful to see that there are no identifying spots or blemishes on the paper.

The handling is that you do the center-tear with the first billet, you pick up the other one and focus attention on it while you open the center with your other hand. The unturned billet is taken in the hand that holds the center so that the folded paper is in front of the open center, masking it from view when the folded paper is shown. (You will understand that the circle and square you draw must take up less than one-fourth of the surface of the billet—centered of course—since the opened center has to be smaller than a twice folded paper.)

As you talk about the clairvoyance test it is quite logical to look at the folded slip, at least a brief glance, and at this point you get your glimpse of what has been written on the center. Since this is only a single word it should present no difficulties—and to bring up a point mentioned earlier, if the center is upside-down you must read it that way.

You proceed with your divination, naming something synonymous with but not identical to what the spectator wrote: *shoe* for *boot*, *flour* for *bread*, *hamburger* for *meatball*, and so on.

You do this for three reasons:

1. To be exact would not be believable.
2. To give you an excuse to open the slip "*to see how close you came*."
3. To sell the idea that you've just divined what's on this slip by calling out—not what you now see and memorize—but what was on the torn center. Correcting your slight mistake at this point is a great convincer on this miscall.

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This done, you now tear up this slip *and the torn center along with it*, dropping all on the other torn pieces. Any analytic spectators may examine the fragments and will find everything in order—but of course you do not suggest this.

All that is left to do now is to proceed with the telepathy test, revealing the word you glimpsed in the most effective manner at your command.

Credits

I am hardly going to try to discern the creators of the *one-ahead* and *torn-center* principles. The one-ahead principle specifically applied to message readings is often called the Washington Irving Bishop test, but it is highly unlikely that he had anything to do with its invention. Regarding the torn center, Al Mann discusses the history of this move at length in two of his monographs (*THE TESSERACT* and *THE PURLOINED THOUGHT*), using as his basis information provided by Sid Lorraine, but there are reasons to believe that its conclusions may not be correct. Dunninger was using the move in 1915, and even then did not claim it as his own. It is almost certainly a medium's dodge—but one strong contender for the title of its inventor, not previously mentioned, is William Robinson; before his fame as Chung Ling Soo he was an expert on mediumistic fraud, as a reading of his *SPIRIT SLATE WRITING AND KINDRED PHENOMENA* will show. Robinson, it should be noted, was also highly adept at *paper-tearing* effects.

The patter theme concerning concepts, however, is Ray Hyman's, and appeared in his *Concepts Never Die* effect in *The Phoenix*²⁷.



I recently (1981) developed what follows, which is a new handling of the classic three-billet test. In my admittedly biased opinion, it has some interesting advantages over previous versions of the routine.

TRINKLE

For this you require three slips of paper, pen or pencil, and a small bowl—or large cup.

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Two of the slips are handed to the spectator and she is asked to write her birthdate on the first of these, then fold the paper once each way and then once again. You illustrate this with the slip you've retained, putting your paper in your pocket.

When the spectator has done this she drops the folded slip in the bowl which you hold out to her. She is then requested to write her *zodiac sign* on the second slip. As her attention is turned to this task, you cop the birthday billet up under the fingers which hold the bowl. She drops this slip (the zodiac sign) into the bowl as well (you hold it above eye level). Setting the bowl down somewhere that prevents the spectator from looking directly into it, you say that she seems like a good subject and you'd like to try a further test.

²⁷No. 266; Oct. 31, 1952; page 1062.

SCRYPT

The hand with the fingerpalmed billet goes to the pocket; the blank slip—used earlier for demonstration purposes—is fingerpalmed and the hand comes out with the birthday slip at the fingertips.

"I want you to think of a question and imagine it being written on a large blackboard." As you say this you unfold the slip and stare at it in illustration of your words—reading the birthdate as you do so. "Write it down just as you see it, and then fold the paper as you did before." You fold the birthdate slip and switch for the blank as you hand it to her.

She does so and you have her drop this slip as well into the bowl, keeping track of which is which. Reaching into the bowl you release the fingerpalmed birthday slip, take the zodiac sign slip in a fingerpalm, and come out with the folded question slip at your fingertips.

Of course you know the zodiac sign because you know the birthdate.

Handle it this way: *"I'm having a bit of trouble—I know it's either Leo or Virgo but I'm not sure which... well, I'll say Leo."* You open the billet to verify your impression, read the question, smile and say, *"Ah, I was right; Leo—so far so good."* You fold the slip, switch, and hand it to the spectator. It is, of course, the correct slip.

You pick up the bowl, letting the fingerpalmed slip go inside but keeping a finger on it, and shake the bowl. *"Let's try something a bit different,"* you say. *"Take one slip in each hand."* You hand the bowl to the spectator to do this; since you've kept track of the billets you know which one she takes in each hand.

"I'll try to zero in on the birthdate. You help me—concentrate on the birthdate and think of the hand you believe holds it." She does so, and since you hold her wrists in a light grip you can detect the pulse jump that indicates the hand she thought of—so you are now in a position to (a) tell her what hand she thought of and (b) whether she is correct in her guess that it holds the birthday slip!

You now proceed to divine the birthdate; the spectator opens the hand you've indicated and can if she wishes unfold the slip to determine that it is in fact the birthday slip.

Having done this, you can wander off into the middle distance and answer the question still held in the spectator's closed hand, with whatever dramatics you feel called upon to deliver.

Notes

1. You will from time to time encounter a spectator who does not know his or her zodiac sign; it is advisable to be prepared with a small chart which provides this information.
2. If you're worried about losing track of which slip is which, they can of course be marked. Since you don't know precisely how the spectator will fold the slip an edge mark along one end is best.

One way to do this is to take a red marking pen and run it *lightly* along the edge, making sure it doesn't seep out along the surface of the paper.

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If the spectator happens to notice this she will assume it is a remnant of the red binder adhesive found at the top of the pad. You mark No. One with a complete line; No. Two, a fragmented line; No. Three is not marked.

3. For further details on the 'pulse test' consult *Palmythic* (page 110) or the DR. Q SIMPLICITY MINDREADING ACT²⁸.
4. Another approach to the billet structure which I have come up with recently (1991) is this:

You ask the spectator to think of an important date in her life; the stipulation is that it be a date for which she remembers the *day of the week* on which it fell.

The first billet has the date, the second the day, and the third a word or phrase connected with a question concerning that date.

Knowing the date, you use any of the standard mnemonic or calculation methods to determine the day—and proceed as before.

This has a slight advantage over the original routine in that analytical people might figure that knowing a birthdate you would know the zodiac sign—but they won't believe that knowing the date will tell you the day of the week.

The corresponding disadvantage is that some people simply don't remember the day for any important date, or remember it wrong—so you have to make sure *they're* sure.

You can use some speculation here; it is fairly easy to guess, depending on what you are able to observe in many circumstances, that the date may have been that of a wedding or the birth of a child. You will also have the information from the third slip to help you in this.

Credit

The handling of the three slips at the beginning of the routine is Annemann's, from *Telepathy Plus* in his COMPLETE ONE MAN MENTAL AND PSYCHIC ROUTINE²⁹.

²⁸This manuscript, originally published by Thayer, is also included in THE MENTAL MYSTERIES AND OTHER WRITING OF WILLIAM W. LARSEN, SR., page 204.

²⁹Page 18.

AFTERWORD

In his May 1981 New Releases list, in the course of a descriptive review of his publication *MENTALISM FOR MAGICIANS* (by Larry Becker), Jeff Busby saw fit to disparage "...the usual dry-as-dust presentations with slates, nail writers, billets, and the old 'one-ahead' principle." And later: "*Larry [Becker] feels that EVERY magician can slot fast-paced and colorful magic with a psychic touch [sic] into their acts... I agree.*"

Two points to consider here:

One: you can do a dull presentation with the shiniest of props.

Two: more importantly, Maurice Fogel did one of the very strongest acts in all of magic or mentalism with *precisely* the items named; he did so for years, while other performers with hundred-thousand-dollar shows fell by the wayside. You could go into a stationery store and buy all the materials Max Maven uses in his act for far less than you paid for this book—but without his experience, talent and showmanship, it wouldn't do you a lot of good.

You can do a 'dry-as-dust' effect in the middle of a Las Vegas showroom, and all the fog-machines, strobes and chorus girls won't help—or you can hold that audience spellbound with a few pieces of paper on a bare stage...

...because the mystery performer, particularly the mentalist, is judged in terms of *who he or she is, what his or her personality is like, and what he or she does*—not by the props.

A musician is not judged by the cost of the instrument, a dancer is not judged by how much was paid for the dancing shoes; these are simply tools. The idea, common in magic, that an intriguing prop can direct attention away from inadequate performance, underlies much of what is wrong with the art.

In the preceding pages I have tried to provide you with a set of tools; with them you can bore an audience to tears—or you can make them think you're a miracle-worker. I'd wish you luck...

...but luck won't do it; *you will*.

Addendum

Not long after I wrote the above afterword, I learned from Max Maven of Fogel's death.

There are many people in the mystery field more qualified than myself to eulogize Fogel, and to memorialize the charm and talent of this great showman. Instead, let me tell you a story that illustrates his abilities—and also illustrates some of the points I have tried to bring out in the preceding pages.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

Several years ago I took a friend, the well-known fantasy novelist Katherine Kurtz, to see the performance of Romark, a then newly-arrived mentalist/hypnotist who was appearing at Los Angeles' Huntington Hartford Theatre.

We enjoyed the show, and Katherine agreed with me that Romark was a brilliant performer and strong showman—yet, at the intermission which separated the mentalism of the first act from the hypnosis of the second, I noted a certain odd air in her comments. I asked her, as neutrally as I could, what thoughts she had about the miracles she had seen...

...and Katherine, with no previous knowledge of mentalism, proceeded to deduce the methodology of the *center-tear*, *billet knife*, *5x5 principle*, *Add-A-Number*, *Pseudo-Psychometry*...

...and I trust I need not detail my thoughts at that particular moment.

Now I grant you that usually we are (thankfully) not going to encounter in our audiences people with Katherine's intelligence, perceptivity and memory for detail. It is, however, worth noting that she did not view the performance with the idea of '*figuring it out*'; she was there to enjoy herself, and she did—but not, I think, in a way that Romark intended.

What gives point to this anecdote is that a few months later Katherine was my guest at the Magic Castle, and saw Fogel perform—and was convinced a she watched that he was really reading minds.

On reflection, of course, she realized that this was not the case—but she had believed it while she was watching, and for a time thereafter. As she pointed out to me, Fogel had created this illusion for her with *principles she had already figured out* at Romark's performance.

One other comment she made about Fogel is worth noting:

"Of course he's so charming that it really doesn't matter how he does those things..."

I should point out, in fairness to Romark's memory, that he performed his effects with a high degree of competency and showmanship. What it boiled down to, finally and for whatever reason, is that he didn't convince Katherine that he could read minds—and, not being convinced, she was able to consider alternate explanations.

This story tells us two things:

One—that Maurice Fogel was a brilliant and convincing performer; but you hardly needed me telling you that.

Two—that while it is a great deal of fun to play around with principles and come up with baroque and Byzantine methodologies, it is clear that such things are not mentalism. Of course we must require of a technique or method that it not be something so alien to logical procedure that even the dullest spectator knows something is wrong. That given, much of the time we spend in devising mental miracles is for our own entertainment rather than that of the spectators.

SCRYPT

Consider the following: most of you will have read Phil Goldstein's excellent examination of equivoque, VERBAL CONTROL.

Many times I have observed Phil's close associate Max Maven (a much better dresser!) as he convinced magicians who have read the book that he must have been using some *other* technique; Max does this routinely.

Please understand that I am not arguing that the inner secrets of mentalism technique are unimportant and can be exposed publicly without harm. That would be a bad idea—in the same way as television shows and magazine articles that discuss special effects in a forthcoming film are a bad idea; not because they reveal a secret but because they make it impossible for us to view the movie with innocent eyes. We think: "...there's the matte painting...there's the switch for the stunt man..." and are pulled right out of the story and the dramatic line of the film. The same is true of mentalism; if your audience considers it to be tricks, they will be trying to figure out the tricks instead of getting involved in the presentation.

Mentalism is more than puzzles; and to think its secrets are all-important is to make it something less than puzzles.

Therefore—learn your techniques and methods well, and do your best to keep your audience unaware of this substructure of your performance...

...but to echo in different words the final lines of the *Afterword*...

...remember that secrets are not mentalism; *you* are.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

TardTwo—page 771

Triposte—page 59

DECKALOGUE

[1982]

FOR A LONG time a mild debate has existed concerning the use of playing cards in mentalism. The standard argument is that a lay audience tends to associate cards—particularly when used by a mystery performer—with card tricks, and thus if one thing the mentalist is doing might be a trick, then perhaps *everything* he or she does is a trick.

The other side of this argument is a simple one, consisting of the fact that almost every major mentalist of this century has used playing cards in his act—Dunninger, Annemann, Fogel, Koran, Canasta, Berglas and Max Maven, as well as scores of the lesser lights—and it hasn't seemed to hurt their acceptance by the public. Indeed, a man named Olof Jonsson convinced psychic researchers that he had genuine supernatural powers, and for the most part his demonstrations consisted of card 'tests'.¹

It is true that there are some effects which are quite clearly card tricks, and belong in the realm of the magician rather than that of the mentalist who wishes to sell the idea of his or her powers to the audience.

It is also true, however, that sometimes the line that divides the two categories is almost impossible to draw. Laypersons will often accept the Haunted Deck as an example of psychokinesis—while the Devano Rising Cards, which is the same effect at a ninety-degree angle, will strike them as a magical effect. Often there is no way to judge how an audience will categorize an effect other than an actual trial, and even that is not a definite test; what in the hands of one performer will be a mystifying card trick will when executed by another be a psychic wonder.

This is not always simply a matter of performing competence; it has a great deal to do with the style of the performers—how they sell themselves, how the card effect(s) relate to the other material in their acts, what kind of perception of them as performers they're trying to create in the minds of the audience—all, of course, highly personal and variable.

All the above is a long way of saying that the effects which follow will be, in large part, what you make of them. I have tried to keep them direct and logical, reasonably strong in content and feasible in method.

¹See THE PSYCHIC FEATS OF OLOF JONSSON by Brad Steiger.

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Given competent performance, they should entertain and, let us hope, mystify your onlookers—but as to whether the spectators come up after the show to kiss your ring...

...that'll be up to you.

In this section I have changed direction slightly from the previous works in this volume, simply because the literature of card magic is so vast that discussion of basic principles and approaches is not really worthwhile.

Instead, we'll proceed directly to the effects. I have tried to include as much variety as possible within the general context of card mentalism with the intent of providing something for every kind of performer.

CLUBBLE

EFFECT

You say you will attempt an experiment involving choice and chance; the instrument used to demonstrate this will be a deck of cards.

One spectator is asked to call out stop as you riffle the deck, and he remembers the card stopped at; this selection represents *Chance*. The deck is then spread into a wide fan and you ask a second spectator to think of any card that she sees; this, clearly, is *Choice*.

Asking the spectator who made the second (*Choice*) selection to concentrate on her card, you eventually remove a card from the deck and place it on the table. At your request the spectator names her card and you smile benignly.

The spectator who peeked at the card is now asked to concentrate on his selection. Moving a card to the top of the deck, you ask this spectator to name his card as well.

The card on top of the deck proves to be the correct one; as an afterthought you flip over the card on the table—and it, too, is correct.

METHOD

The only requirement is a duplicate card—an extra Three of Clubs, for example; this card and its twin are both on top of the deck as the effect begins.

You slip-cut one of the duplicates to the center of the deck, get a break below it, and do a riffle-peek force of the Three of Clubs on the first spectator. (For those unfamiliar with this move, it is very simple; your right forefinger ruffles the outer top corner of the deck from face to back, timing the riffle to reach the break as the spectator calls stop. The timing requires practice, but it is not difficult to acquire.)

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When the spectator has noted the card you drop the break.

Turning to face the other spectator, you spread the cards from hand to hand (faces toward her) and ask her to think of any card.

You ask this spectator to concentrate on her card; as she does so, you run through the deck and remove the Three of Clubs which lies at the center. The card is placed face down on the table and you ask her to name her card. When she does you smile slightly and say, "Fine."

Turning again to face the first spectator you say, "Let's see if I can do as well with you."

You ask him to concentrate on his card. Running through the deck, you remove the card named by the *other* spectator and place it on top of the deck. Asking the spectator now concentrating to name his card, you perform a double lift to show the Three of Clubs. "Is that correct?" you ask.

As he agrees it is, you turn the two cards face down as one and take off only the top card. You use this to lever over the card on the table and show that it, too, is correct—but of course what you do is execute a Mexican turnover to show the right card on the table. The card you still hold is now casually dropped face up on the table; it is, as it should be, the Three of Clubs.

NOTES

It is not essential to do a Mexican turnover in the last part of the effect; alternatively you can simply drop the card in your hand on the tabled card, and as you pick them up mix them around a bit so it is not clear which is which. If this is done you may wish to play it that you apparently 'forgot' to show the tabled card earlier, and exhibit it as something of an afterthought.

When putting the first card on the table, keep it fairly close to you and out of the spectator's direct reach, so as not to tempt her to grab it and turn it face up.

It may happen that both spectators think of the Three of Clubs (or whatever duplicate you're using); this you will know as soon as the *Choice* spectator names her card. If this does occur, you have only to ask the other spectator to name his card, pause to allow the coincidence to sink in, and then have either spectator turn over the tabled card.

The chances of this happening can be maximized by doing a slow running spread with the second spectator, timing the Three of Clubs to arrive at the psychologically optimum moment; the only disadvantage, a subtle one if at all noticeable, is that the selection procedure may not appear *quite* as clear-cut.

Do not succumb to the temptation to use a Joker for the duplicate simply because two of them are often provided with a new deck; spectators know that too. On the other hand, use of a popular card—such as the Queen of Hearts—will somewhat increase the chances of the second spectator deciding on it.

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CREDITS

This effect is a direct outgrowth of *The Three of Clubs* trick in GREATER MAGIC². I added this particular handling and the second selection to give a reason for the procedure involving an extra card.

²Page 327.

DAISECTION

This effect combines two creations of Dai Vernon's to produce a thought-of-card routine with some very puzzling aspects.

EFFECT

You talk briefly about the Rhine-card experiments conducted at various universities, and point out that in these tests there are only five different ESP symbols used. *In what follows,* you say, *"we will also be using only five possibilities—but we'll select them at random from a full deck of playing cards."*

The deck is spread face down (after a shuffle, possibly) and five cards are indicated by a spectator as the deck is spread from hand to hand. These cards are outjogged and, when all five have been chosen, you strip them out and square the packet, putting the rest of the deck aside.

The five cards are shown one at a time to the spectator; you request that she think of one. Placing the packet behind your back for a moment, you bring forward one card and *without looking at it*, place it in your pocket.

You then attempt to receive an impression of the card and are able to get the suit and approximate value—but successful this far, you now appear to *"lose the mental link"* and can go no further. Instead, you spread the four cards remaining, faces toward the spectators, to show that the thought-of card is not among them.

Naturally, it is the card you take from your pocket.

The strong point here is that you bring the thought-of card out of your pocket *before* the spectator names it; indeed, she need not name it at all!

METHOD

On the bottom of the deck you have a memorized group of six cards; these are of values five through nine inclusive, and of

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mixed suits. (Example: Five of Hearts, Six of Spades, Six of Diamonds, Seven of Diamonds, Eight of Clubs, Eight of Hearts.) The cards are not in numerical order, but the order must be known.

As stated in the description of the effect, you have five cards indicated as you spread the deck and these cards are outjogged. The deck is squared and in removing and squaring the packet it is switched for the group of six cards on the bottom of the deck. You accomplish this by means of Vernon's BDV move. See page 35 for a full, illustrated explanation of this sleight. However, here a brief description as the sleight is executed within the context of this trick:

As the spread is closed a break is obtained above the bottom six cards of the deck.

The deck with the five outjogged cards is held in the left hand for a moment while the right fingers spread the jogged cards into a slight fan.

The right hand then moves back and grasps the inner right corner of the deck *above* the break. The left hand, holding the six cards below the break, moves forward and strips out the outjogged cards, the slight fan concealing the lower packet.

A break is maintained between the two groups of cards as the left hand moves back to its former position, apparently just to square up the fanned cards. In reality the five cards above the break are left at the bottom of the face-down deck and the left hand now moves away.

The packet is shown to the spectator a card at a time. In doing this, a buckle count is employed to show the fourth and fifth cards as one. The last card (apparently the fifth but actually the sixth card) goes on the face of the packet, which is then squared and placed behind the back.

The second card from the face of the packet is removed and, without looking at it, you place it in your side jacket pocket. The other five cards are then brought forward in a squared packet.

Now you begin to pump for the identity of the thought-of card—but with this great advantage: from the point of view of the spectators you are going for one of *fifty-two* possibilities, rather than just *one of five* cards.

You continue with the pump until you have ascertained by elimination the card thought of—but you don't name it. Instead, you indicate that you've gone as far as you can go with the telepathic part of the test and would like to see how you have done with the clairvoyant aspect.

In one out of five situations the thought-of card will actually be in your pocket (in fact more often, since the fourth card displayed—the one you pocketed—is frequently chosen), and when this is the case you display the five cards in your hand as four, faces outward, again using the buckle count—then remove the thought-of card from the pocket.

In the rest of the cases you cut the thought-of card to the central (third) position in the packet and perform a standard buckle count which conceals

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the card. You then cut it to the top of the packet, palm off and produce from the pocket.

Alternatively you can cut it to the bottom and use a gambler's palm.

(Note: You use the mixture of middle-value cards because they are difficult to remember distinctly and thus this display of four cards plays as fair. The spectator's primary focus is to note that her thought-of card is not there; that one of the other four may not be a card she saw before will not be noticed.)

CREDITS

The BDV move is Vernon's, as noted; also used here are concepts from his *Mental Card Miracle*³, which should be consulted for niceties of handling. The plot is that of Henry Hardin's *Princess Card Trick*⁴.

³STARS OF MAGIC, page 80.

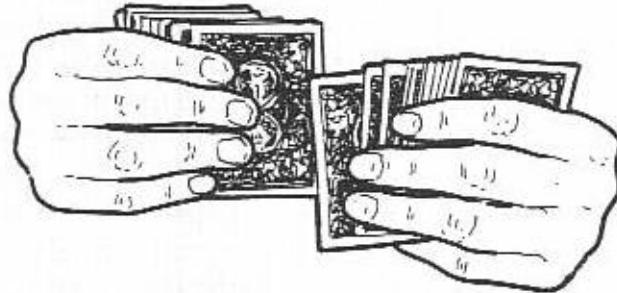
⁴Hilliard and Downs' THE ART OF MAGIC, page 80.

TALISMANACLE

EFFECT

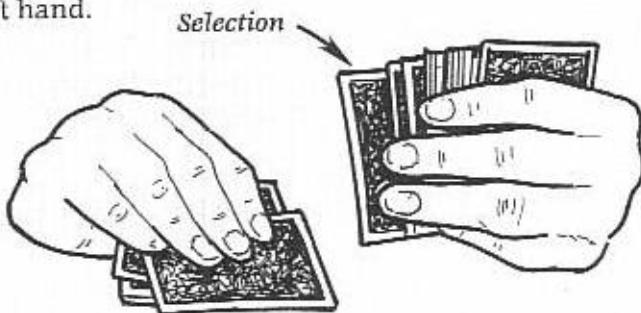
You hand a deck of cards to a spectator and ask him to shuffle it thoroughly. While the spectator does this you remove a small amulet from your pocket or a ring from your finger. You explain that this talisman has the peculiar property of being able to pick up vibrations from objects held near to it, and retaining them for a time. You offer to demonstrate.

- You ask the spectator to look through the deck, pushing the cards from left hand to right, until he comes to a card he likes.



He is then to place all the cards in front of his card on the table, leaving his card at the face of those still held in his left hand.

Selection



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Handing him the talisman, you tell him to hold it near to—but not quite touching—his card. This done, he is to place the cards in his hand down onto the tabled portion and then cut the deck if he wishes. You caution that, during this process, the ring is not to touch any other cards or the table—or the vibrations will be dissipated.

Finally he is to place the ring on top of the tabled deck.

Despite the seeming fairness of this procedure—and you may have your back turned the whole time—on taking back the ring and holding it in your clenched fist you are able to determine the identity of the card and remove it from the deck.

METHOD

A one-way deck is used; it is one of the Annemann kind, i.e., marked on the faces. (Annemann's procedure was to use a pin to scrape away a small portion of one index.)

If the spectator goes through the procedure outlined, he will reverse the half bearing the chosen card at its face, in relation to the rest of the deck; a simple trial will show how this happens. The purpose of the talisman is to *occupy the spectator's right hand* so that he *must* put the cards he holds in his left hand down onto the deck with the same left hand—also, any cuts he makes must be made with the left hand alone.

This will result in two blocks of cards reversed in relation to each other; the face of one of these bears the chosen card. The other will have at its face the original bottom card; if you have been able to spot this card you have no problem. Otherwise you must do a very simple one-of-two pump or any two-out handling, such as placing both cards on top of the deck and doing a single or double lift as required.

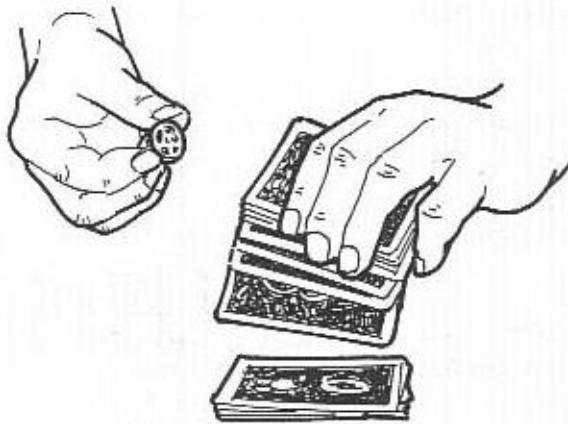
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Needless to say, you must do a bit of acting with the talisman before you start looking through the deck; you have to give the impression that the talisman has identified the card for you before you ever touch the cards.

Variation One: Memorized Deck

If you are conversant with a memorized deck, you can alter the handling as follows:

You have the spectator place the left-hand packet down just to the left of the packet already there. He then *riffle shuffles* the two packets together, and



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can continue with as many riffle or overhand shuffles as he likes—so long as no cards are reversed end for end.

On retrieving the deck, you run through it and rapidly count the number of reversed cards; if there are twenty-eight such reversed cards then the chosen card will either be the *twenty-eighth* in your stack or the *twenty-fourth* ($52 - 28 = 24$).

Needless to say, if this approach is used, some alterations in the presentational *mise en scène* will be necessary to maintain the logic of the procedure.

Variation Two: Stripper Pack

In this version the procedure followed is identical to that in the first variation—except that in this case, when you get back the deck, you strip out the reversed cards and put them on the face; in doing this a break is retained between the halves. Now the only thing that need be done is a rapid count of one half, giving two numbers as in Variation One.

Variation Two-and-a-Half: Stripper Pack

As in Variation Two, but this is all done with the cards out of sight under the table—or with you blindfolded—and rather than physically locating the card you pump for which of the two it is, and name it.

Variation Three: Stripper Pack

Handling as above, but without a stacked deck; however, the top card of the deck is known to you. After retrieving the deck and doing the strip-out, look for the key; the chosen card will be directly above it.

Note: In this version only *one* riffle shuffle is done, though the spectator may cut as much as he pleases.



You will note that, in the primary method or Variation Three, the deck is not stacked—and you can therefore permit the spectator to shuffle beforehand. If you do this you must of course ascertain that he does not inadvertently turn any of the cards end for end.

CREDITS

I devised *Talismanacle* in the early 1960's, inspired by a key-card handling of Dai Vernon's which bore no technical relationship to it. At that time I showed it to a number of magicians in the New York area. It should be noted that in 1970 a similar handling was described by Karl Fulves in his *Future Ghost*, which appeared under his Alan Brown pseudonym in *Pallbearers Review*⁵; it did not, however, incorporate the amulet subtlety which makes failure almost impossible.

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The memorized-deck variations have as their inspiration the Ed Marlo work on the subject which appeared in *Ibidem*⁶.

⁵Vol. 5, No. 11; Sept. 1970; page 357.

⁶No. 8; Dec. 1956; page 11.

DECIDEAL

It must be said at the onset that what follows is inspired by Paul Curry's excellent handling of the *Ten-Card Deal* in his PAUL CURRY PRESENTS⁷. In Curry's handling, as in most versions, the performer always wins the two-handed poker game in spite of the fact that the spectator seems to have complete control over who gets what cards. This can happen in one of three ways—spectator has one pair, performer has two pair—spectator has two pair, performer has three of a kind—or spectator has three of a kind, the performer has a full house.

While playing around with the Curry version it suddenly occurred to me that if the dealing procedure there used was followed, it was possible to arrange the cards so that, no matter what the spectator did, the hands of both the performer and the spectator could be predicted *exactly*.

EFFECT

You hand the spectator a folded slip of paper to pocket for the time being; this done, you pick up a deck of cards and, running through the deck, remove ten cards.

With some care you arrange these cards, saying that you are trying to anticipate five choices the spectator will be making.

The packet is handed face down to the spectator and you instruct him to deal two cards face down onto the table, side by side. He is to decide which of these two he wants for his poker hand and slide it off to one side—the remaining card, which will be yours, is replaced on the bottom of the packet.

This procedure is followed four more times; you then take from the spectator the packet he holds and tell him to turn his cards face up to find out what he's chosen for himself.

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The spectator's hand holds only a pair, which is beaten by the nine-high straight which you show.

You remind the spectator of the paper in his pocket; he removes it and reads:

"Thank you for dealing me the nine-high straight; sorry you dealt yourself only a pair of fives."

METHOD

In culling the cards from the deck you actually take *eleven* cards—a pair of fives, pair of sixes, pair of sevens, pair of eights, the *other* pair of fives and a nine-spot. In the assembled packet the order of the pairs doesn't matter, as long as they are kept together, but the nine-spot must be at the face.

If the dealing procedure as outlined in *Effect* is followed, you and the spectator will each end up with a pair of fives, a six, a seven and an eight; unknown to the spectator, you also have an extra card, the nine-spot. All you need to do is display your hand with one of the fives concealed (buckle count, Ascanio spread, etc.) and then ask for the prediction to be read out.

NOTES

It is possible to do the entire routine with jumbo cards without a great deal of difficulty.

While the aesthetic charm of an Ace-high straight is not to be denied, I think it better to use cards in the middle range of values as indicated; the principle seems, at least to me, to be somewhat better concealed.

You might play around with the idea of using two *identical* cards in the ninth and tenth positions in the packet; with this, your prediction could name a specific card in the spectator's (losing) hand.

And as long as we have a packet of eleven cards thought to be only ten, we could also incorporate the eleven-card-count force. Using the four fours,

pairs of fives, sixes and sevens, and the Eight of Hearts, we could use to good advantage a Gene Grant-Nathan Stark subtlety⁸ in which a prediction can be written to read the Eight of Hearts or the Four of Spades.

Using this, you'd place the Four of Spades in third and the Eight of Hearts in fifth position from the top. Ask for any number between one and ten and count to one of the two cards as per the usual routine.

Using a different selection of cards for this, of course any standard two-way out procedure can be used.

It would also be possible to do this routine with ESP cards—you end up with a complete set of five symbols and the spectator ends up with a pair that indicate the design he'd previously thought of...

⁸Published in *Magick*, No. 164; Oct. 15, 1976; page 817.

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...but just because something is possible is no reason that it should necessarily be done!

On being shown this routine, Phil Goldstein came up with an interesting variant application of the principle; you'll find it in *Magick*, No. 269⁹ under the title *Second Hand*.

CREDITS

As noted, the Curry routine was the direct inspiration for *Decideal*; all I have done is to add the stack which allows for the specific prediction. For Curry's excellent handling touches see his PAUL CURRY PRESENTS. The eleven-card count (also known as the European 10/11 force) is the invention of Corvello.¹⁰

Mention should also be made of Karl Fulves, who in his *Even Money Proposition* published in *Pallbearers Review*¹¹ developed the general procedure of having cards chosen from dealt pairs.

The *Ten-Card Deal* itself is safely beyond any certain attribution, an object of many cloudy but unverified claims.

Decideal was created in 1974, shortly after the Curry book was published; a similar routine (possibly also inspired by Curry), called *Automatic Poker*, was devised by Karl Fulves and may be found in his SELF-WORKING CARD TRICKS¹².

⁹Oct. 24, 1980; page 1343.

¹⁰Corvello's force seems first to have been described in English in *The Blonker Cards Of Ken Brooke*, a marketed item.

¹¹Vol. 4, No. 7; May 1969; page 257.

¹²Page 26.

IMPOSITION

A few years ago considerable interest was generated in the *any-card-at-any-number* effect by David Berglas, whose exceptionally clean performance of the feat baffled many sophisticated card handlers.

There have been many versions of the effect in print; perhaps of these the most notable was Spaulding's *Audience Rapport*¹³.

Like Spaulding's, the routine to follow uses a confederate; however, in this version the person who secretly assists the performer has nothing to learn or remember, and can be instructed in his part in a few moments. Also the details of the procedure seem to rule out the possibility that any kind of confederacy or stooging could bring about the result.

EFFECT

You stand at a table; two spectators have been invited to assist, and they sit at the table to your left and right.

Removing a deck of cards from its case, you mix them a bit in a desultory fashion while you study the two spectators; then you give the deck a cut at what seems to be a precise point. The cut completed, you place the deck on the table and comment that you will not touch it again.

Each spectator is now handed a small white card and a pencil; the one on the left is asked to write the name of any card in the deck, while the one on the right is requested to write any number between one and fifty-two.

You collect the two cards and say that before going any further there are a few questions you want to ask each spectator.

¹³See the *Linking Ring*, Vol. 22, No. 7; Sept. 1942; page 21.

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"Do you know what card this gentleman has written?" you ask the spectator on the right, indicating the other helper; the spectator of course must answer "No." You ask the spectator on the left if he knows the number written by the other spectator; his response likewise must be in the negative.

"Did I suggest any particular card to you, or number to you?" Again the answers are in the negative.

"Finally," you ask, "since I put down the deck of cards, have I touched them at all?" Both spectators verify that you have not.

"And your choices are..." you glance at the cards, "...the Seven of Clubs for you and the number twenty-five for you. Would either of you pick up the deck and count down to the twenty-fifth card?"

One of the spectators does so and the twenty-fifth card is, of course, the Seven of Clubs. The white cards are left on the table.

METHOD

The spectator who is your confederate is told only that when handed the card and pencil, and asked to write a number, she is to write *nothing*—and later is to agree with whatever number you call out.

You use a memorized deck, of course; if you give it a shuffle at the beginning of the effect this is a false one—and this should only be done if you can do it convincingly. A simple Charlier mix is quite sufficient.

Finally you cut the deck to bring card No. One in your setup to the top, and place the cards down on the table. You proceed as described in *Effect*; at some point while both (?) of the spectators are writing on their cards you obtain a thumb-writer (either a band-type or Boon writer is the preferred choice for this situation) and get it in place.

Getting the two white cards from the spectators, you note the name of the playing card written down by the innocent spectator; this need not be done secretly but no great attention should be drawn to it if at all possible. As you proceed with your questions, you have all the time in the world to fill in on the other card the number at which the named card lies in the memorized deck. From a technical point of view the effect is now over, but let's take things just a bit further.

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The questions you ask (as given in the description of the effect) are important, and not just because they build up the conditions under which the effect takes place. They are three questions which the confederate can answer *absolutely truthfully*; the audience will sense this sincerity and it will give the proceedings a convincing air.

As to the written-on white cards, you do *not* display each one as you read it. Rather, you read them off *without* showing them—then, *after* the spectator begins to deal, you casually throw the two cards face up on the table. Logically, at this point, you don't have to prove anything, and any attempt to do

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so will be fatal to the effect. The deck of cards is the important thing, and that's where the attention should be focused rather than on the white cards which presumably are simply the records of two choices.

You will find that from time to time the spectators do not check the white cards at all; if this should happen, do not draw attention to them no matter how much effort you have put into thumb-writing the number.

Let the applause be your reward.

Phil Goldstein suggests a way out of the situation when the lead in your thumb-writer breaks: you can have the stooge write any number—and when you read off the number you simply miscall it as the required one. While this angle does not have the 'stooge-proof' approach of the basic routine, it's a good idea to keep in mind for emergencies.

CREDITS

As noted in text.

HOYDLE

What follows is a particular presentation and handling of the *Tossed-Out Deck*, made famous by the late David Hoy. While it may seem to some that I am painting the lily in this instance, I do think there are situations where this presentation may be preferable to the briefer one usually performed.

EFFECT

Snapping a rubber band around a deck of cards, you toss it to a spectator and have him peek at a card by slightly breaking the deck at one point long enough to get a glimpse of a single card. This procedure is followed with two more spectators, the last of whom tosses the deck back up to you. For the moment you place the cards aside.

You say you will attempt to get an impression of the three thoughts. You pick up a slate and scribble on it for a while, finally setting it aside without showing what you have written.

Taking up the deck again, you remove the rubber band and approach the first spectator, asking him to look through the deck and remove the card he thought of—but not, for the moment, is he to show it to anyone else. The other two spectators do the same and you put away the deck. Collecting the three cards, you return to the stage.

"*The thought-of cards were the Six of Hearts, the Eight of Clubs and the Queen of Spades,*" you say, showing the cards as you call off their names. "*Here are the thought impressions I received.*"

You turn around the slate to reveal that you have written the names of the same three cards.

METHOD

The early part of the routine follows along classical lines; a three-kind force deck arranged cyclically (1-2-3-1-2-3-1-2-3) has

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the rubber band snapped around it and the three spectators peek at the cards. In placing the deck aside, however, you switch it for a deck which is for the most part ordinary; it has *two* extra sets of the three force cards, making three of each in all. Another set of the three force cards is in your pocket in a known order.

After writing your 'impressions' you have each spectator in turn take his card from the deck; you note them as they are taken, either by glimpse, stack, or having them marked on the back (and such a mark can be very simple and obvious as it has only to identify one of three cards).

If the spectators have each chosen different cards you have nothing further to do; if, on the other hand, there are one or two duplicates among the three, when you put the deck away in your pocket you palm the card or cards that will complete the set. Collecting the three cards, you add the palmed card(s) to them.

Once back on stage, you have only to show the three different cards—concealing any duplicates behind them—and then put the cards aside as you pick up the slate for your final revelation.

NOTE

The switch of the deck, no matter how blatant, should not attract attention because it is done *after* the initial selections. The action can be as simple as putting the deck into your pocket and taking another one out—or having the second deck behind the slate on the table; the first deck is dropped behind a handkerchief somewhat further back on the table, and the other deck comes into view as the slate is picked up.

CREDITS

While the basic principle behind the *Tossed-Out Deck* has been floating around for a long time—and various odd claims have been made regarding it—there's not much question that the presentation currently used is the inspiration of the late David Hoy.

AUTOMATICARD

This is a new application of an old device; the routine is of the spectator-as-mentalist variety.

EFFECT

A spectator is given a deck of cards and asked to look them over and give them a thorough shuffle. He is then instructed to place the deck behind his back, give it several cuts, and then turn the top card of the deck over; this done, he is to make several more cuts so that not even he knows the location or identity of the reversed card.

You then instruct him to return the cards to their case; now he is requested to choose a second spectator to take part in the demonstration.

This person is seated in a chair and blindfolded; she is given a slate and chalk and told to relax. You further tell her that gradually a card will come into her mind—she is not to make any conscious choice but simply to let this happen—and she will find her hand writing the name of the card on the slate.

Eventually she writes, say, "Six of Hearts".

When the deck is removed from the case, and the reversed card located, it proves in fact to be the Six of Hearts.

METHOD

Of course, an UltraMental Deck is used; this is in your pocket with the blindfold. You use a straight deck with the first spectator for the behind-the-back business, and you switch it for the UM Deck in getting the blindfold. That's all there is to it—but don't confuse the space taken to describe this with its effect on an audience.

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NOTES

Alternatively, instead of a UM Deck you could use a Brainwave Deck—but it would, of course, have to be one in which all the backs were the same color, matching the first deck. I think the slight additional drama of having the card appear face down and turning it over makes the UM Deck preferable.

I don't indicate, in the above description, whether or not you keep the first spectator on stage throughout the routine. It is possible to argue this either way—his presence on the stage is a visual reminder of how the card was selected, and he can be given the card to hold at the denouement. On the other hand, he stands there for a long time with nothing to do, and might distract from the automatic writing of the other spectator.

Do understand that it is this 'auto-writing' on the part of the spectator that is the real effect, and this is where your presentation should focus; the revelation of the reversed card at the conclusion is simply verification, proof that the writing obtained was valid.

You will from time to time get a spectator who is so resistant to this kind of thing—the same sort of person who makes a poor hypnotic subject—that no writing will occur.

It is possible to verbally cue him or her to write the name of any card that pops into mind, but this is in my opinion inadvisable as it eliminates the major appeal of the effect—which is the appearance of something genuinely strange going on.

In these cases, you can simply make some comment about this particular spectator's vibration not meshing with that of the first person (!) and have another spectator selected.

CREDITS

The UltraMental Deck was devised by Joe Berg; the Brainwave Deck, in its final form, by Dai Vernon. (For a discussion of this see *A HISTORY OF THE BRAINWAVE PRINCIPLE* by Karl Fulves.)

TWINKEY

EFFECT

Two decks are used; one, still in its case, you place in full view on the table. Removing the other deck from its case, you ask a spectator to name any card. He does so, and you run through the deck, locating the card and handing it to the spectator.

"That represents a selection made by choice," you say. *"We'll have a second selection made, but this one will be by pure chance."* You overhand shuffle the deck; during this, the spectator is asked to return his card *face up* to the face-down deck. The cards are squared and handed to the spectator to hold.

You remove the tabled deck from its case and spread the cards from hand to hand, inviting the spectator to duplicate your actions with the deck he holds.

Presently a face-up card shows in your deck; of course, it matches the one showing in the spectator's deck. You remove this card *and the one directly above it*; the spectator does the same. The two cards are turned over and these, too, are identical.

METHOD

As in the previous item, a faked deck is used; here it is a Brainwave Deck—in the sense that the cards are roughed face to face—but all backs are of the same color. This deck is the one placed on the table at the outset.

The other deck is an ordinary one; all the cards are face down, but are arranged in pairs matching the roughed pairs in the faked deck.

In performance:

When the spectator names his card you spread this ordinary deck face up and remove his choice. As you do so, you cut the deck at this point to bring the other card of the pair to the bottom.

DECKALOGUE

You begin a slow overhand shuffle; at some point the spectator drops his card on top of the shuffled stock; and you then drop the rest of the deck on top of it—which, needless to say, puts the two cards of the pair face to face.

The spectator is handed the ordinary deck, you remove the *ur-Brainwave Deck* from its case, spreading the cards and splitting at the appropriate pair—and another 2704-to-1 miracle has occurred.

NOTES

While the cards in the ordinary deck must be *paired* to match those in the fake deck, they do not need to be—indeed should not be—in the same order, but rather in a random arrangement.

By trimming the upper card of these pairs short, this deck could be riffle-shuffled beforehand—but all things considered, it is hardly worth the trouble.

In fact, this first deck need not be arranged at all; as long as you know what the other card of the pair is, you can spot it as you spread through the cards, hold a break, and cut it to the bottom. I recommend the way I've outlined because I think it results in a cleaner appearance of the handling and is something you don't have to think about at all.

CREDITS

See *supra*.

TETRANCE

I am not sure just how many versions of the card-in-wallet prediction are in print, but here is yet another—which can stand on its own or be a useful adjunct to other methods.

EFFECT

You remove your wallet and place it in full view on the table. Handing a deck of cards to the spectator, you tell her you are going to have her select a card by a combination of choice and chance. Choice will be first—she is to cut any number of cards from the deck. (You stipulate that she should cut at least a dozen or so, *"to make it more interesting."*)

Now comes chance: you tell the spectator to count the cards in her cut-off packet and, this being done, to add the two digits of her total together and count to that card in her packet.

As she is doing this you remove from your wallet the single card it contains. The two cards are, of course, identical.

METHOD

The wallet is of the Humber type, with two compartments opening at opposite sides. Into the pocket on each side is placed an envelope containing a double-faced card; alternatively, two envelopes are glued together with an ordinary card in each—this procedure being followed with both compartments so that four possible cards can be shown.

The cards matching these in the deck in play are placed at the *tenth, nineteenth, twenty-eighth, and thirty-seventh* positions on top of the deck.

With the cards in these positions, the procedure outlined in the effect will cause the spectator to arrive at one of the four cards.

DECKALOGUE

When the spectator counts her packet you must observe *how* this is done in order to instruct her correctly:

If she *reverses* the order of the cards in counting, she will then count from the *top* of the *face-down* packet.

If she counts the cards from hand to hand *without* reversing them, she will count from the *face* of the *face-up* packet.

An example: she deals the cards face down, reversing their order, and has thirty-eight cards. $3 + 8 = 11$. The eleventh card from the top of the packet will now be the original *twenty-eighth* card, one of the four covered by your prediction possibilities.

You can now immediately proceed with anything requiring the use of an ordinary deck—something not possible with many methods for this effect.

NOTES

You count the cards along with the spectator—to make sure she counts correctly, for one thing—and thus will be able to figure out which of the four cards she will finally end up with; this requires no calculating, really, just common sense.

A Humber Wallet is not required; you can have two double-facers in a double envelope, for example. The use of double-*enders* has an application here, if desired.

If you possess John Thompson's excellent Nemo £1500 routine, originally marketed by Ken Brooke, you will realize how it can be adapted to this routine to give you a finish with an ungaffed wallet—and a kicker that stuns audiences.

CREDITS

The handling of double-faced cards and wallet as here used is generally associated with the name of Al Koran; a number of similar handlings have been in print in various places.

The mathematical principle involved is quite ancient; Al Koran, again, used it in a prizewinning effect, *Prediction Supreme*, in *Magic Wand*¹⁴, and it had been in print many times by then.

A related application of the principle—used as a single card force—was described by Burt Sperber in *Magick*¹⁵.

¹⁴Vol. XXXV, No. 211; Oct. 1946; page 98.

¹⁵No. 194; Dec. 9, 1977; page 967.

COINCIDECK

This is a fairly straightforward multiple-coincidence effect using two decks. Its only drawback is that it is so simple to do that the tendency is not to give it the strong presentation it deserves.

EFFECT

Two decks of contrasting back design and color are used; while one spectator shuffles one of the decks, you spread the other deck face up and have a spectator touch any card. The first spectator gives his deck a complete cut and then cuts off a small packet and places it on the table; you place the touched card from your deck on top of the packet. This procedure is repeated once or twice more, with the first spectator finally putting the balance of his deck on top of the tabled portion.

Putting your deck away, you slowly deal through the other deck until you come to the first of the face-up cards; it is dealt, still face up, to the table, and the next card is dealt beside it. This action is repeated with the one or two other cards.

When the face-down cards are turned face up, they are in each case exact matches for the cards beside them.

METHOD

As indicated in the introductory paragraph, it is very simple. The deck handled by the first spectator is ordinary and unprepared. The deck you use, however, consists of matching pairs of cards roughed back to back; the lower cards of the pairs (i.e., the face-down cards concealed by the face-up cards) have backs matching those in the other deck.

As each card is touched, the roughed pair is removed as a single card and placed on the packet as described; later, when you deal through the deck, you split the pair as you come to the face-up card and deal the two cards down singly. That's it.

DECKALOGUE

NOTES

The rough-and-smooth deck should have a single card at the bottom, back outward, so that this back can be shown when the cards are removed from the case.

In this particular situation, it would not be excessive to trim the lower cards of each pair short so that the deck could be casually shown (by means of a riffle) to consist of a contrasting back to that used by the first spectator.

CREDITS

I devised this effect several years ago. A somewhat similar routine, using ungaffed decks but not providing for the selection of the prediction cards by a spectator, was described by Gus Southall and Francis Haxton in *New Pentagram*¹⁶ under the title *Second Choice*.

The rough-and-smooth principle is Ralph Hull's, in its application to card magic and mentalism (though Dai Vernon had earlier used a specific application of this principle in his Brainwave Deck).

¹⁶Vol. 11, No. 1; March 1979; page 1.

INSIGHT STRAIGHT

In his MENTALISM FOR MAGICIANS, Larry Becker had an effect called *The Little Black Book*¹⁷ which had, I thought, an excellent plot. The method of card selection, however—which as Becker noted was adapted from Vernon's Zodiac Card Trick—did not strike me as convincing.

Here's another approach to the plot, and some changes of both method and presentation.

EFFECT

You remove from your pocket five poker chips, placing them on the table. Spreading a deck of cards with faces toward yourself, you remove a single card and place it aside face down, putting one of the poker chips on top of it.

Giving the cards a brief mix, you deal the top sixteen face down in a four-by-four square.

Handing the four remaining poker chips to the spectator, you tell him to toss one of them on *any* of the sixteen cards.

He does so; you remove the other cards in the vertical and horizontal rows in which the card lies, replacing them on the deck.

This is repeated twice; after the cards are removed the third time, one un-chipped card will remain. The spectator puts a chip on this card, so at the end of the process he has four tabled cards, each covered with a poker chip.

You take the top dozen or so cards from the deck and fan them faces toward the spectator; the cards are a random group. "You could have chosen *any* of these," you say. "What did you choose?"

¹⁷Page 33.

DECKALOGUE

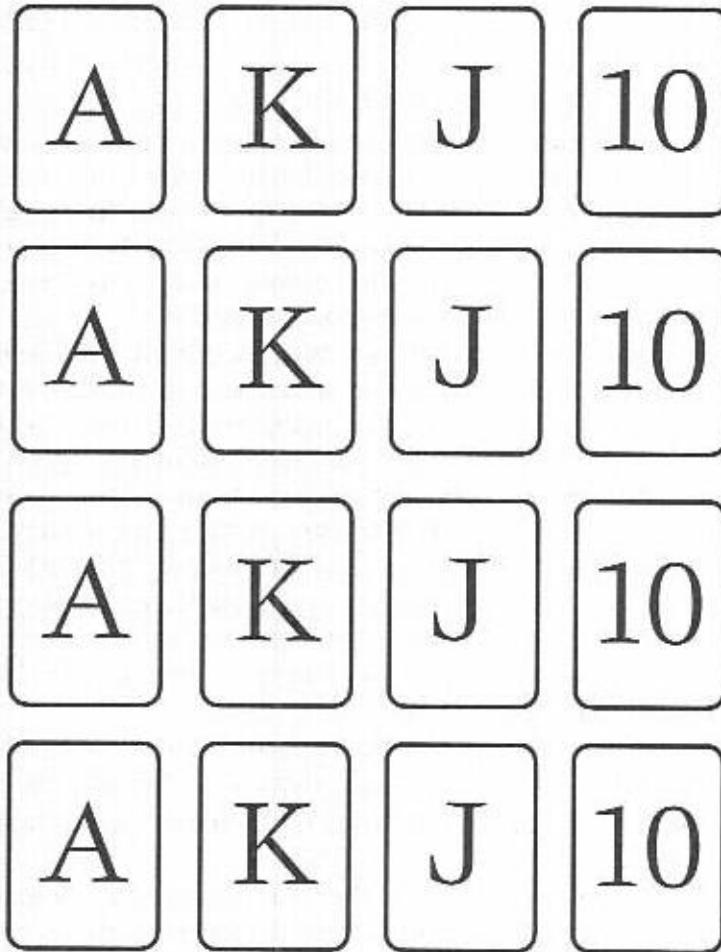
The spectator turns his cards face up; they prove to be a Ten, Jack, King and Ace. Obviously a Queen is needed to fill this straight; you have the spectator turn up the card you placed aside earlier. It is, of course, a Queen.

METHOD

A simple arrangement of the deck is necessary; the four Tens are on top of the deck, and beneath them are the four Jacks, Kings and Aces in order.

After placing the poker chips on the table, you run through the deck and take out any Queen. This is placed to one side, face down, and covered with a chip.

After any simple false shuffle which retains the top sixteen cards in position (and even this is not necessary), you deal these cards out in the four-by-four square:



If the procedure as given in *Effect* is now carried out—he puts a chip on any card, you remove the others in that horizontal and vertical row—he must inevitably end up with one card of each value.

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You get a break beneath the top card of the remaining talon; as you replace the first group of unwanted cards on top of the deck you retain this break beneath them; the break is held as the other cards are replaced. When the last such cards have been put back on the deck you simply pass the whole group above the break to the bottom. Because of the added card an indifferent card will now show on the face.

Some very slight misdirection is required (or perhaps a great deal, depending on how well or badly you do the pass!) and this can be as simple as asking the spectator a question (*'Did you have a free choice?'*) or as strong as having him turn over the tabled cards first. In this latter case you alter the patter somewhat (*'Those are the four you decided on from all of these... '*). This is not quite as theatrically valid as showing these cards first, but it is better than getting caught with your shift in gear...

... in any case, the technical part of the trick now done, you proceed with the revelation.

NOTES

By having an added stock of duplicates (four Tens of Spades, four Jacks of Spades, etc.), you can end up with a Royal Flush. If these twelve duplicates are added to the full deck you can simply lap them from the top of the deck as you reach over to slide the 'hole' card to the center of the table; alternatively you can pass the duplicates to the bottom as in the original handling and lap them from there at some convenient moment.

In the Larry Becker version the hole card is originally sealed in an envelope—and we could mix this concept with one from Robert-Houdin(!) to come up with a presentation where you show a yellowed envelope, addressed to your grand-daddy from Doc Holliday (or E.S. Andrews, if you want to be obscure); when opened, the envelope is shown to contain a letter from Holliday talking about *'the last card game in Tombstone, and the card that won the pot'*—and along with the letter is a likewise aged and yellowing Queen of Spades.

If you do this latter version, please go to the trouble of getting an antique card, or reproduction thereof; they are recognizably different from modern cards. Aging of letters, envelopes, etc. has been described in *Invocation, Magick* and a number of other places.

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The presentation must, obviously, be introduced along the lines of a gambling game. I talk about Poker and Keno as a way of getting into the effect.

If you like working 'strong', you can give the routine a challenge aspect as follows:

Pointing to your hole card, you say that in order for you to win, your card has to *improve* the spectator's hand of four; if he's got nothing, you have to match one of his cards to give him a pair—if he's got a pair you have to make it three of a kind—two pair, you've got to match one of the pairs to give him a full house—and so on. In addition to building up interest in the outcome, this suggests that there are in fact a great many possible results.

DECKALOGUE

If you're performing in a place where gambling is legal, you might use *real* house chips, which the spectator stands to win if you fail in your challenge. (It should be noted that I accept no responsibility for the losses of those who use this angle and happen to screw up the stack...)

Please note that while this effect can be played as 'influence' it would be a mistake to try to present it as anything like straight mentalism. You could, of course, use the well-worn *Psychic Gambler* type of presentation—but since such presentations usually make your audience hate you, I don't recommend it...!

CREDITS

The 'hole card' plot is, as indicated, inspired by that of Larry Becker. The matrix force seems to have been first described in print by Maurice Kraitchik¹⁸; others who have worked on the principle include Walter B. Gibson, Stewart James, Mel Stover, Howard Lyons, Pavel, and Phil Goldstein.

Brief grumble

As just mentioned, the force procedure employed above is described as a *matrix* force, which in the mathematical sense here relevant means a *particular arrangement*, with specific properties peculiar to that arrangement. Various magic square concepts, such as Mel Stover's *Irrisistible Force*¹⁹ and Phil Goldstein's *Rainbow Matrix*²⁰, are also properly described as matrix in principle.

The term *matrix*, however, has somehow got itself attached to the principle used in several number predictions—Randomental, Predictatotal, *Thunderbolt*, *Ad Infinitum*, *Ultimate Matrix*, etc.—which does not involve a matrix at all, as the numbers within groups need not be in any particular order.

Given their operating principle, such effects might more properly be said to use a *re-alignment* concept, depending as they do on resetting the addition problem at a ninety-degree angle from its original structure.

That's all—I just wanted to make this observation in an attempt to stem the confusion of two principles having the same name. Actually, I've probably only *added* to the confusion....

¹⁸See his MATHEMATICAL RECREATIONS, page 184.

¹⁹The New Phoenix, No. 340; page 171.

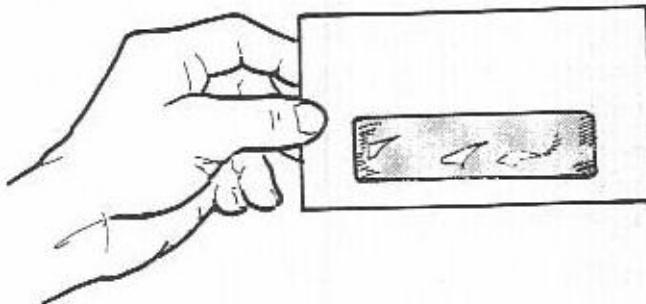
²⁰See his VIOLET BOOK OF MENTALISM, page 8.

SELLER'S MARKCUT

EFFECT

You hand out a deck for shuffling. While this is being done you remove from your pocket a business-size envelope (about three-and-a-half by six-and-a-half inches) and show it freely.

It is of the kind that has a glassine window centered in the lower half of the face of the envelope; through this window a portion of colored index card is visible.



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You remove the index card for a moment—the envelope is seen to be otherwise empty—and mention that you have written a prediction on the card. You do not show this, however, but replace the index card in the envelope.

You will attempt two tests, you say, concerning precognition and clairvoyance.

A spectator is asked to spread the shuffled deck face down and slide any card out of the spread. You take this card and—without showing its face—slide it into the envelope in front of the index card.

DECKALOGUE

The spectator is now requested to square up the deck; she can, if she wishes, shuffle it again. She then is to cut off a portion of the cards. This done, you place the envelope onto the tabled portion, to mark the cut, and the cut-off cards are replaced above the envelope.

Bringing your clairvoyant—and histrionic—powers to bear, you presently name a card. The cards above the envelope are removed by the spectator, as is the envelope itself, and the top card of the lower half proves to be the named card.

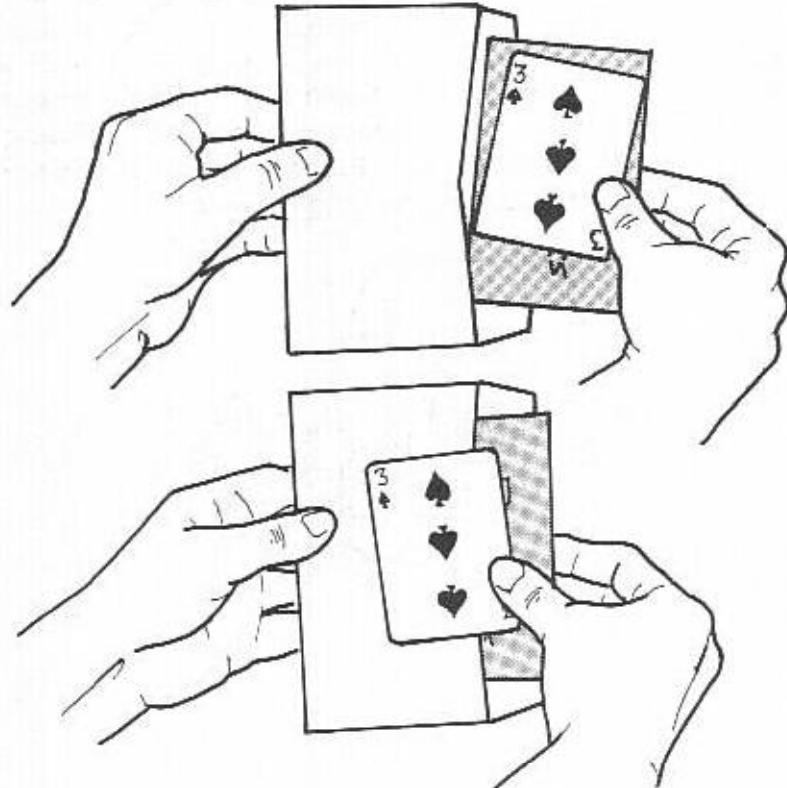
The spectator now removes the first-selected card and the index card bearing the prediction from the envelope; they are, of course, a perfect match.

METHOD

To prepare, you write the name of any card on the index card. The named card is removed from the deck and, with the index card, placed in the envelope; the playing card goes *behind* the index card.

The flap of the envelope is given a sharp crease at its fold line so it will lie flat against the envelope, but the flap is *not* moistened or tucked into the envelope.

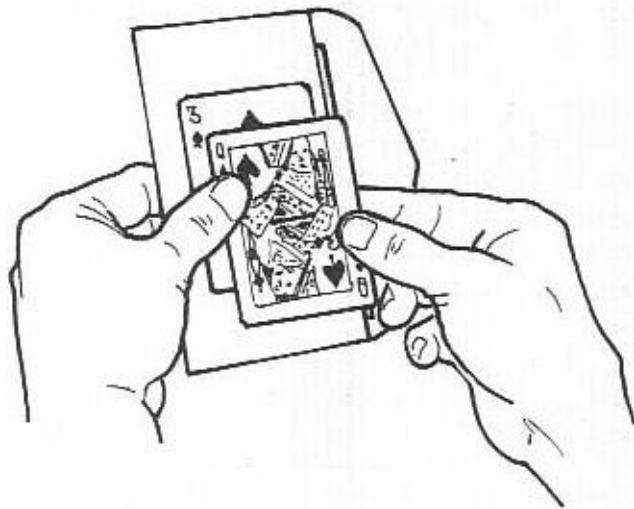
In working, you show the envelope freely and then remove the index card, taking the playing card along behind it. When you replace the card in the envelope you push the playing card to the left slightly (presuming you hold



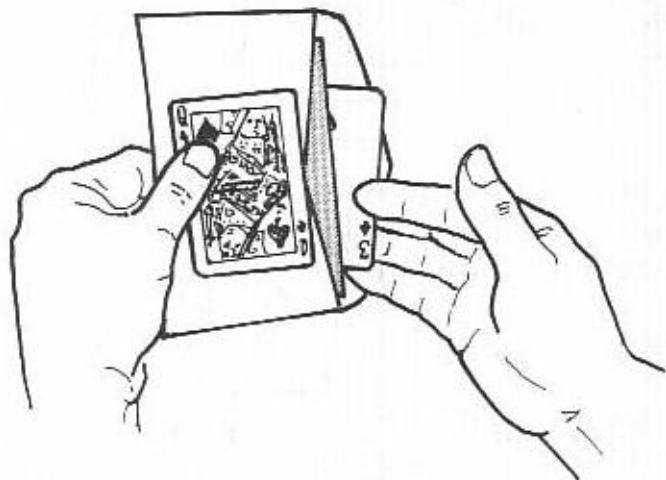
MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

the envelope in your left hand and the card[s] in your right). By doing this you are easily able to let the playing card remain outside the envelope, where it is retained by the left thumb which holds the envelope at the rear. The window, of course, faces the audience.

You take the card chosen by the spectator between your right thumb and forefinger, at the right edge, face of course to you. Bringing this behind the envelope, you place it above the card already there.



Simultaneously, your right first and second fingers clip the predicted card while the chosen card is released from the right thumb and first finger, leaving it under the left thumb. Without a pause the backs of your fingers brush back the flap and insert the switched card in front of the index card.



DECKALOGUE

(This is why the flap must lie flat; if it were, for example, pointing outward, there would be no reason for your hand to go that far behind the envelope and the move would not appear quite legitimate.)

As a trial will show, this switch looks *extremely* fair—and smooth performance of it is not at all difficult to acquire.

During this you have several opportunities to note the identity of the original selected card, which now is concealed behind the envelope.

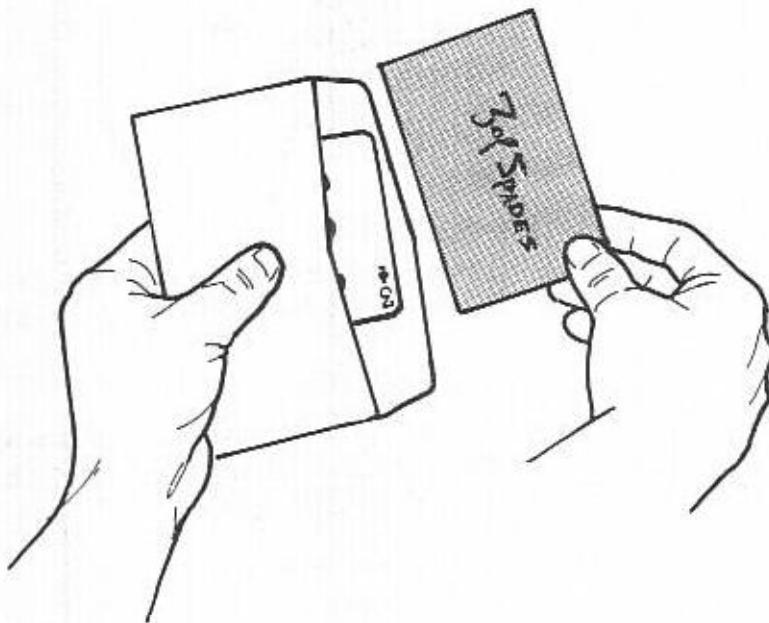
The deck is shuffled as desired and cut as per the description in *Effect*; placing the envelope down on the tabled portion automatically loads the card beneath the envelope onto this portion of the deck. This part of the handling does require reasonable practice, since it is important that the loaded card be in alignment with the rest of the deck.

Your work is now done, and it's all over but the shouting (... or whispering... I don't know how you present *your* mental effects...)

An alternative handling of the card switch, a bit more complicated but with an interesting visual continuity, can be done as follows:

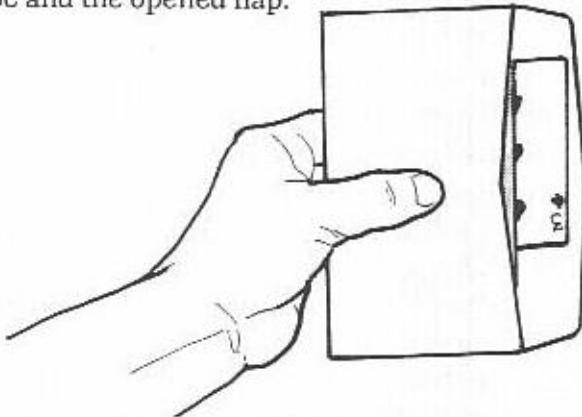
You're at the point where you're holding the index card with the playing card behind it. The flap of the window envelope points *out*, rather than being folded down.

You start to put the prediction back into the envelope; here you let the playing card go in—but not far enough to be seen through the window—and then take the prediction card away for a moment as you make some additional comment.

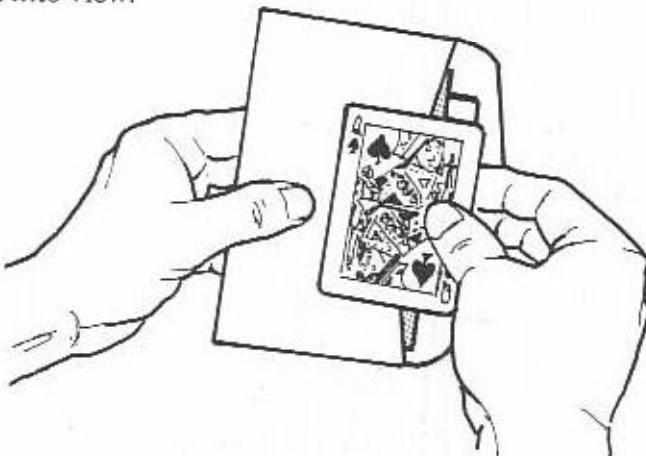


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Now you insert the prediction card completely into the envelope, but *behind* the playing card—which is kept out of view behind the upper front of the envelope and the opened flap.



Taking the card to be switched, you apparently insert it directly into the envelope; actually you slide it along behind the envelope, but your fingers go in *front* of the prediction card, hitting the outer edge of the playing card and pushing it into view.



The card appears and moves exactly as it would if you were doing what you are supposed to be doing; it doesn't seem that the card is really out of sight at all.

CREDITS

The envelope load of a card onto a deck is the invention of Tom Sellers.²¹

There have been innumerable card-into-envelope switches; the handling here described is, to the best of my knowledge, my own.

²¹See *The Practical Prediction* in his CARD TRICKS THAT WORK, page 13.

TRIO

Only one of the three following items is a full-fledged effect; however, I think you'll find the concepts useful.

WAIKIKUT

Handing the deck to a spectator, you turn your back; you instruct her to cut off about a third of the deck and place it on the table. She is to cut off half the remaining cards from those in her hand, turn them face up, and place them on the tabled packet. The last third is then to be placed, still face down, on the face-up cards. The spectator has, of course, noted the face-up card of the central packet during this process.

You offer the spectator her choice of telepathy or clairvoyance: you will either name the face-up card noted by the spectator—telepathy—or the two face-down cards separated by the face-up packet; unknown to anyone, these can only be discerned by clairvoyance.

The spectator makes her choice, and you make your divination.

If she chooses telepathy, you tell her to cut the deck in half and riffle-shuffle the halves together, after which you either look through the deck or have the spectator call off the names of the face-up cards; the selected one will be the first face-up card after a long string of face-down cards.

This is, of course, Bill Murata's Waikiki Location.

If the spectator chooses clairvoyance, your task is even simpler, since the two cards on either side of the face-up packet are the original top and bottom cards of the deck, which you were cunning enough to note beforehand. What you've done is basically the venerable *cut force*, with an intervening face-up packet.

NARROWZARROW

This is an angle for those of you who, like me, know the basics of the Zarrow false shuffle but have never been happy with the necessary center cut and break-holding.

You have two cards trimmed narrow; one of these is at about the center of the deck and the other is seven or eight cards down from the top.

You riffle to the central narrow card, break and take the bottom half in the right hand. The halves are riffled together until the narrow card near the top falls. At this point you release all remaining cards in the right hand, followed by the six or seven in the left.

The halves of the deck are pushed together, in the course of which the Zarrow separation is executed, so that the right-hand group goes in above the bulk of the left-hand cards but below the top packet. The deck is squared.

The process is repeated, which brings the deck back to its original order. Note, however, that you can place a false cut or two between the two shuffles, since it isn't necessary to hold a break.

The technique of the Zarrow shuffle itself has been described many places since it first appeared in *The New Phoenix*²², most notably in Karl Fulves' RIFFLE SHUFFLE TECHNIQUE, PART ONE—but if you read *that* sort of thing you are hardly likely to need the base and impure gimmickry here discussed.²³

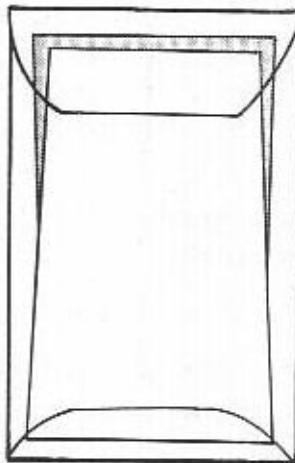
OUTSTRIP

This is a rather obvious approach to revealing one of two cards placed in an envelope—but I've not seen it in print anywhere in quite this form.

The two cards to be used are taken from a Stripper Deck; one is reversed end for end, and the two are placed into a pay envelope which is then sealed.

For the revelation, rip off the end of the envelope nearest the *wide end* of the card you want. The envelope is squeezed by its edges at the other end—it bellies open—and with a sharp shake you drop out the proper card, while the other one is securely retained within.

It's simple—but it works every time. It can be used with *Tetrance* (page 218), or in fact any effect requiring a two-out capability.



²²No. 346; July 1957; page 210.

²³It should be noted that the above technique was originally published *prior* to a similar crimped-card handling by Ed Marlo in Racherbaumer's CARD FINESSE, page 91.

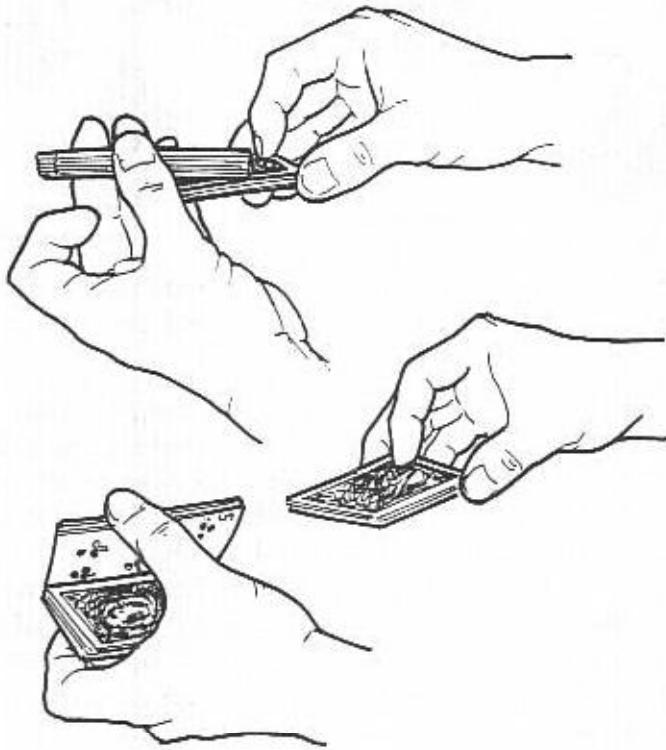
CHARLIERSATZ

[1992]

Here are two false cuts of my own devising which I have been using for over twenty years (though I wouldn't be surprised to learn they are re-inventions). Both are constructed around the Charlier one-handed cut.

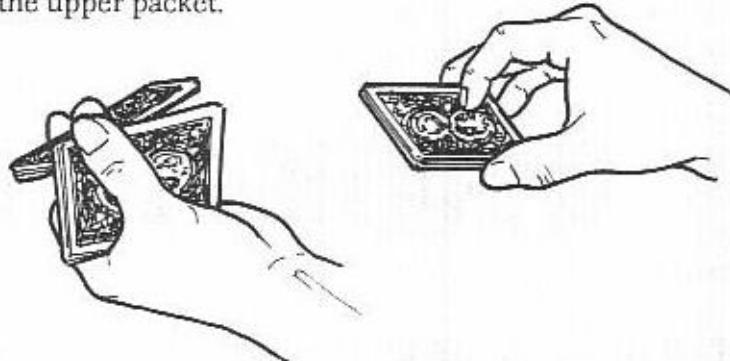
Version No. 1

You hold the deck in your left hand in preparation for the Charlier cut. (That is, the deck is held suspended above the palm, thumb on the left edge, fingers on the right.) The right hand approaches and removes the lower third of the deck.

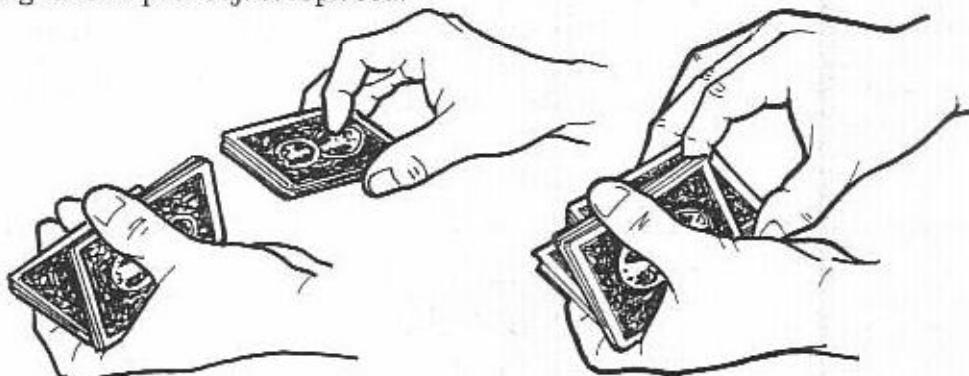


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The left hand executes the Charlier cut with the remaining portion of the deck: the thumb allows roughly half the cards to drop onto the left palm; and the left first finger, which is curled under this packet, lifts its right side until it clears the upper packet.



The upper packet is permitted to fall flat onto the left fingers and palm. The thumb then lowers the vertical packet onto the horizontal one. As the two transposed packets begin to come together you place the packet in the right hand between them. As the deck is squared you get a break beneath the right-hand packet just replaced.



You now cut all the cards above the break to the table, and place the cards in your hand on the tabled cards. The deck remains in its original order.

Version No. 2

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The position is as above, but this time you remove the *center* third of the deck and execute the Charlier with the separated top and bottom sections. As you place the central third back into the center on completion of the Charlier, you retain breaks between all three packets. The top packet is now placed on the table; the next packet on top of it; the final packet in the hand on top of all.

You have, in other words, reversed the order of the packets in cutting them to the table. As before, the deck remains in its original order.

Both of these cuts are somewhat showy and 'flourishy'—thus perhaps not appropriate for the classical mentalist—but in certain contexts you may find a use for them.

DECKALOGUE

AFTERWORD

As I've noted elsewhere in this collection, in my descriptions of effects and methods I have tried very hard to write concisely (some say 'tersely'), without padding. This means, among other things, that I don't ask you to wade through the usual lauding of the effects, describing them *à la* dealer ads.

In return, I ask only one thing; that you take the time thus saved and try these effects out, *not* on magicians or mentalists. Try them on *real* people—whose time, attention and/or money you have to earn.

I think you'll be pleased with the results.

CROSS-REFERENCE

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Vespers—page 34
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Thionic—page 69
LeNormand's Legacy—page 99
LeNormand's Legacy II—page 101
Doublet—page 303
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Quintastic—page 753

GRYMWYR

[1982]

THE AREA OF mentalism which has come to be known as '*bizarre magick*' has an interesting history. It could be said to have begun with the publication of Arthur Monroe's *Voodoo* effect in an early number of *The Jinx*¹, but it is also possible to argue that it began with the demonstrations of David Abbott in his '*mystery house*', so well described in his two books—*BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE MEDIUMS* and *DAVID P. ABBOTT'S BOOK OF MYSTERIES*.

The difference, I think, lies in *intent*; Abbott was presenting his wonders as demonstrations of 'what the mediums do' and was making no claim to supernatural power, unlike the bizarre magician of today.

There are, of course, any number of people who object to this kind of thing; these critics usually come from the ranks of stage magic.

This is interesting, since perhaps the most famous precept of the 'Father of Modern Magic'—Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin—is that '*A magician is an actor playing the part of a magician.*' It is clear from the context that Robert-Houdin did not mean '*... an actor playing the part of a stage magician,*' though many magicians seem to interpret it that way; no, he was saying that '*a stage magician is an actor playing the part of a real magician.*'

This misinterpretation is undoubtedly a result of the stage magician's fall from the theatrical heights; most performers in the field today assume that, just as their own audiences know that it's all trickery and guile, magicians were always so regarded.

Clearly this is not so; as late as the turn of the century magicians were commonly thought to have some sort of occult power. The constant recurrence in the posters of the day of imps, devils and other occult-themed items is not accidental. Magicians were aware of how their audiences regarded them, and to greater or lesser degrees played on this belief—though few of them might admit it.

It is, indeed, possible to argue that the decline of magic as a major theatrical attraction was connected with the demystification of its marvels; when the secrets of the sorcerer were made available at any newsstand or book shop,

¹No. 32; page 208.

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(It should be pointed out that the modern 'boom' in magic has come along precisely in step with a revival of interest in the occult and supernatural. To regard this as coincidence is reassuring—but unrealistic.)

The mentalist, however, has not been touched to any great degree—yet—by this demystification; he or she still finds that most members of the audience accept what they're seeing as real. To maintain this acceptance, mentalists have tended to be fairly circumspect in their choice of material; they have steered away from effects that are 'too good', effects so impossible that the audience has to suspect trickery.



This is, incidentally, one of the primary ways of differentiating the mentalist from the 'mental magician'—the mentalist is aware of a line that can't be crossed without destroying the illusion of true mental phenomena, while the mental magician may pass that boundary with every effect in his program.

It is also true, as I have mentioned elsewhere, that different audiences vary widely in what they'll accept; I have heard laymen seriously discuss psychokinesis as the principle operating in the *Linking Finger Rings*!

To digress from a digression—it should not be inferred that the mentalist is (in my opinion) necessarily any better than or preferable to the mental magician. While, on a theoretical level, an act composed of classic mentalism may be more theatrically cohesive than that of the mental magician—out there in the real world are many performance situations where the mental magician may be a far better choice. The only reason such a distinction needs to be made, in fact, is the tendency of many performers to drift back and forth between the two approaches with no clear idea of who they are or what they're doing.

It should also be noted that mentalism is not *inherently* entertaining; neither is 'mental magic'; neither is magic.



The odd result of the mentalist's acceptance by the audience is that it is discovered that things can be done—and taken as real—that would be laughed at if presented seriously within a context of straight magic.

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The Monroe *Voodoo* effect previously mentioned² is a perfect example of this; done in the midst of a magic routine it may play as interesting, even impressive—but there is simply no comparison with the awesome impression it will make when 'set up' with the lead-in of an effective mental routine.

Given all this, the stage is set for the arrival of bizarre magick.

Though he was preceded by a very few others, such as T.H. Chislett (*SPIRITS IN THE HOUSE*) and Charles Cameron (who wrote in *Pentagram*), there's no

²See *The Jinx* cited above or ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 111.

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question that the main force in bizarre magick for many years was the incomparable Tony Shiels.

Through his contributions to *The New Jinx* (and, later, *Invocation*) and his books—13!; SOMETHING STRANGE; DAEMONS, DARKLINGS AND DOPPELGANGERS; AND THEN THERE WERE 3 (with Tony Raven and Roy Fromer); and THE SHIELS EFFECT—Shiels almost single-handedly created a whole new genre within mentalism.

Shiels' work inspired others; it is fair to say that he was the major contributing factor (pun intended) to the appearance of a magazine devoted to this one area—the aforementioned *Invocation*.

Invocation, in turn created a whole new breed of magick-oriented writers (or unleashed their creativity), far too many to list here, though I cannot pass without mention of at least two: Stephen Minch, whose *BOOK OF THOTH* and *LOVECRAFTIAN CEREMONIES* have been major influences in the field—and the redoubtable Tony Andruzzi, from whose plumed pen have come *THE NEGROMICON OF MASKLYN YE MAGE*, *GRIMOIRE OF THE MAGES*, and the *DAEMON'S DIARY*.

(As of this writing (1982) Tony has just assumed the editorship of the *New Invocation*; he'll no doubt inject new blood (heheh!) into the publication, and we can expect *NI* to provide us with a host of novel and miraculous feats on a regular basis—and that will be the first miracle!)

(NOTE 1993: Tony Andruzzi and his *New Invocation* have now both passed into history—both will be missed.)

Bascom Jones' incredible *Magick*—now (in 1982) beginning its twelfth year, an impressive accomplishment—has from its earliest issues provided for the worker of bizarre magick; there must be literally hundreds of appropriate items in its pages, not to mention the many *Bonus Inserts* which touch on relevant subjects.

So there's no shortage of material...

...why isn't anybody doing it?

The reason is hardly obscure. Stephen Minch addressed it directly in his introduction to *LOVECRAFTIAN CEREMONIES*, in which he said: "The number of persons who could carry off such a role [that of sorcerer or wizard] must be incredibly small."

Very true; indeed, with the exception of Stephen himself, Max Maven and several people named Tony, one would be hard pressed to find performers who could put this material over in anything approaching a convincing fashion.

The problem, in my less than humble opinion, has a great deal to do with setting as often described in routines for this type of effect. Even if you have managed to create a convincing 'wizard's lair'—a den with everything from a candle-splattered skull to an ancient iron-bound grimoire—it is highly unlikely that people stepping into it are going to regard it as anything other than an

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elaborate 'set' for your performance. Unless you play the part of the wizard every moment of your life—unless, in fact, it is your life—it will simply seem to all but the most ingenuous spectators that what they're seeing is clearly an *act*.

I am not saying that this role is *impossible* to bring off—just damned difficult.

There is, however, another approach—and I can best describe it by offering two scenarios:

ONE: You've gone to the old Morton House at the edge of town. It's been deserted since you were a child, and you have heard, from time to time, rumors of a terrible murder that occurred there...and of someone—or something—that has lived there ever since. It's said that people who spent a night there, bums and hoboes, never came out...and even strayed *pets* have disappeared in its vicinity.

But you think your own child might be playing in there, so you put the old stories out of your mind and push the cobwebbed door open.

Even in the dim light of late afternoon you can see the footprints in the dust of the stairs; a child's footprints.

You call out; no answer.

Slowly you ascend the stairs, hearing them creak and wondering if they'll take your weight. Other sounds come to you; rustlings, flitterings—a bird, caught in the attic—and a distant, *scraping* sound; something with claws...

...at the end of an inky corridor you see a door left ajar; you make your way cautiously down the hallway and edge the door open...

...and with shocking suddenness a bony, *fleshless*-hand snaps out and around your throat...

TWO: It's a sunny Saturday afternoon; your wife is down at the Safeway supermarket with the kids, stocking up for the week, and you—since the damned washer is on the blink again—are at the Laundromat in the shopping center, doing the family wash. Surprisingly there aren't too many people here—thank God for small blessings!—but one of the few is a former neighbor, Marge. She was a bore when she lived next door and she's *still* a bore, but you're pretty much trapped, so you listen to her with half an ear as she rattles on about nothing in particular.

The sudden silence, therefore, is very noticeable; you look up. Marge had been piling her wash into one of the huge dryers but now has stopped; she is peering into the machine with an expression of distaste. "Ugh," she says, "what is that? Did somebody—..."

...and then *something*—green, rubbery—*something* lashes out from the machine and pulls Marge into it, almost like a frog eating a fly. A hose, you think, a loose piece of hose inside the machine; caught on something and snapped—but you can't make yourself move forward, even when the terrible screams

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are suddenly cut off. It wasn't a piece of hose, no matter how much you want it to be; it was... it was a tentacle.

While the preceding two vignettes may lack quite a bit in literary polish, the point I am trying to make with them is this:

While the skeleton hand of the first example is hardly something innocuous, it has nowhere near the force of the second example. Why? Because, first of all, it occurs in a classical deserted haunted house; a clichéd notion. Most of us do not have any great personal identification with a haunted house; it is not part of our world, it is part of the movies, of horror, of, finally, the world of make-believe.

Secondly—a skeleton hand that can grasp, without benefit of muscles and tendons, is also in the realm of fantasy; even the least-educated observer knows that 'things don't work that way'. It is no more real than the dancing skeleton in a marionette show.

Most of us have been in Laundromats, however, and know them for what they are—the most boring places in the entire world. They may not impress us, but we can identify with them; we know them; we're at home in them.

And...

...we know about tentacles, too; they can crush you, they've got those suckers that scar and rend flesh, and they exist in the real world—on an octopus, on a giant squid—and what else?

And when was the last time you looked inside one of the big dryers? Who knows what might be down there—out of sight...?

This is, in fact, the technique brilliantly used by the author Stephen King (whose *DANSE MACABRE* is essential reading for the mentalist working in the occult realm).

King's novels gain their power in large part from use of the ordinary, everyday world as the setting for the horrific events. In *The Mist*, shoppers at a suburban supermarket suddenly find themselves under siege by other-worldly creatures lurking in a sinister fog. In *CUJO*, the relentless and hellish menace is the rabid family dog.

King makes us identify with his characters as real, and living in a world we recognize because it's our world, too; so that when the monsters come to get them, we think: *hey, the monsters could come to get us...*

...what does all this have to do with bizarre magick?

As previously mentioned, it is extremely difficult to play the sorcerer and have your audience buy the premise, buy the bit—have them believe that what they're seeing is really happening.

When you play yourself, however—at which you have at least *some* experience—you are usually going to come across as more believable than if you attempt to pass yourself off as the inheritor of Merlin's mantle, or Aleister Crowley's.

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More important, however, is this:

By playing it straight, you establish what happens as going on *in this world*—not in a magical never-never land. You act as yourself, perhaps skeptical but curious—there are these rituals you know about, they're probably just superstition, but why not give them a try and see if anything happens?

Granted, with this approach you don't come off as some kind of occult master of the supernatural—but that does not necessarily make what you do *any less effective*. Indeed, to the degree that it is more believable than the mystical warlock approach it will be *more* effective.

After all, you're already a mentalist; isn't that weird *enough* for you?

There is also, I might point out, one huge advantage in this sort of approach having to do with the methodology of various effects in the genre:

The secret workings of some routines may require of you—and your audience—procedures which, on the face of it, don't really make much sense. If straight mentalism you only have a few choices—figure out an alternative method; find an angle or presentation that seemingly justifies the procedure or drop the effect.

In bizarre magick, however, when you take the approach of interested student rather than omnipotent master, there is one all-purpose cover-line you do it in a particular way *because the ritual requires it*.

(A good example of this is the torn center effect; though it is possible to justify it in various ways, it is still an odd business to have a spectator write something down and a few seconds later tear up the paper...)

(...but if you're using Tony Raven's Magic Circle Of Dr. Faustus center-tear pads, or the Henning Nelms presentation in MAGIC AND SHOWMANSHIP³, it makes a lot more sense; you are simply following an arcane procedure as required.)

What it boils down to is this: if you're the boss—i.e., the master warlock—you should be able to meet anyone's objection or challenge. (*"Defy me, puny mortal? I shall summon from the Pit those who shall chastise thee!"*) Ahem. If, on the other hand, you are the experimenter, the student—you have to follow instructions—and so, by extension, does the audience.

The effects which follow cover a wide range of possible approaches—all the way from close-up items which are clearly mental magic with an occult flavor, to a dramatic playlet which those who experience it are unlikely ever to forget.

Many of the effects lend themselves to a wide range of different presentations; while in describing a routine I may give the one I use, you are by no means obligated to follow it exactly—but indeed to adapt it to your own personality, and to turn these fantasies into your own personal reality, for yourself and your audiences.

³Page 83.

SOREcery

Since I dislike self-advertisement *within* mentalism and magic books—feeling as I do that if the material can't speak for itself no amount of adjectival decoration is going to help—I will only say one thing about what follows: I would never put it into print if I weren't positive that it will eventually get around, or that sooner or later someone else will come up with the same combination.

EFFECT

You talk about voodoo, and the popular misconception that the victim has to know about the curse in order for it to be effective. This, you say, is not the case—and what you proceed to do seemingly proves your thesis.

You explain that for the witch doctor to inflict pain on another, he must first believe it himself; naturally you do not wish for the spectator to be the victim and suffer some strange malady, so you will take that role in the proceedings—and obviously, then, the spectator must play the part of the witch doctor.

A simple test will be tried; the spectator is to concentrate on one of the five fingers of his left hand—and, further, to imagine the thought-of digit beginning to throb with pain. Then, when he really begins to feel the pain, he is to imagine it leaving him and moving to you...

...when this has been done you ask the spectator to reveal which finger he was thinking of—and then you turn over your hand to reveal *a blister on the same finger*.

METHOD

When you talk about the spectator actually feeling the pain in the selected finger, you touch each of his fingers in turn very lightly; one finger will offer a slight bit of resistance, and this is the finger being thought of.

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You create the blister by pressing the appropriate finger of your own hand against the hole in a washer you have concealed in your hand (this hole should be no more than a quarter-of-an-inch across). The washer is fastened to an elastic which takes it up the sleeve once its work is done.

There is a bit more to it than that, however.

The business about the spectator actually feeling the pain is not just play acting, to be sloughed off. Strangely, this imagining of pain in the finger and having it become real to the spectator is something that can be done with any even mildly suggestible person—in other words, just about anyone. Try it on yourself, right now, and you will see what I mean.

This is one of those effects which must be presented in a serious manner if you can't do it that way it is best not to attempt it at all.

After the 'blister' has been shown you can hold your other hand above in a 'healing' maneuver for the few moments it will take for the mark to fade away.

Having a washer on a length of black elastic is not at all necessary, though it does make the working cleaner, particularly if you do this from a standing position. You can improvise with what's available—for example, a key can be used, provided it has a hole of proper size in its head; it can then be sleeved (if standing) or lapped (if sitting). In other words, the effect can be done virtually impromptu if need be.

The finger-touching is something that will take a bit of practice and experimentation, and you will have to attune yourself by sensing the slight resistance that will be offered by the thought-of digit. It is not something that will work perfectly every time—though with practice you should hit at least ninety percent—but do bear in mind that since the spectators do not know *exactly* what you are going to do, the appearance of the blister on *any* finger establishes a reasonably strong effect.

CREDITS

The producing of a 'blister' has been described by Jack Tillary⁴, and others who have worked on it include Gene Nielsen, Tony Andruzzi and Joseph M. White; the five-finger touch—an old hypnotist's and medium's stunt—was written up by Al Baker as *The Finger Knows—And Tells* in Al Flosso's *OUR MYSTERIES*⁵.

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(NOTE 1993: Sure and I've got the gift of prophecy—the blister part of the routine above did, unfortunately, get around; as I type, it is in print for the public in Herz' *SECRETS OF THE ASTONISHING EXECUTIVE* and Penn and Teller's *HOW TO PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD*. You might consider holding off on this one for a while, until it has drifted out of the public's consciousness.)

⁴THE TARBELL COURSE IN MAGIC, VOL. 7, page 379.

⁵Page 9.

PINANCE

Following logically along from the preceding item, this also has a voodoo theme. It is my solution to a classic problem in mentalism, which I first encountered in *The Phoenix*⁶. Unlike many versions of this effect, that which follows is specifically designed for the conditions of close-up performance.

EFFECT

Saying you will demonstrate the possible effects of a voodoo curse, you remove from your pocket a package of cigarette papers. "Since we don't have a straw doll here," you explain, "we'll make do with this." So saying, you draw with ball-point pen or pencil the crude outline of a human figure—and explain that while it doesn't look like much, the fact that you drew it will give it a strong mental link with you.

Handing the paper to a spectator, you ask her to crumple it into a small ball; as she does so you remove from your pocket a four-inch hat pin.

Holding the pin point upward, you ask the spectator to (carefully!) impale the paper ball on the pin. Extracting a cork from the same pocket, you set this on the table and stick the pin into it.

You point out that it would be impossible for anyone to know just where the pin has punctured the paper, or whether any of the holes fall inside the outline of 'your' figure—but that, nevertheless, you'll see what you can sense...

... "Ow!" you say, "Right through the neck!" You clutch your throat in some discomfort. "And somewhere else... yes, down in the left foot, a very bad pain..."

⁶*The Malkin* by Robert Fairthorne; No. 130; July 18, 1947; page 521; reprinted from *The Magic Wand*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 213; March 1947; page 32.

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The spectator removes the paper from the pin and carefully opens it; there are a number of holes—but the only two *inside* the outline are in the neck and the left foot.

METHOD

Obviously, of course, a switch is required...

...in doing this effect over the years, I thought for a while that I was doing the switch described by Dr. Jaks in his *Mental Hat Pin* from ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS⁷. When I checked the Jaks description I realized it bore no relation to mine, and that I had devised a completely original switch.

The preparation is extremely simple:

You draw a crude outline of a human figure on a cigarette paper. This should be *very* simple, since you will have to duplicate it on the other paper.

The paper is 'threaded' onto the pin so that the pin pierces an outer corner of the paper—then the neck—then twice more outside the outline—then the foot—and perhaps once more at an outer corner. The paper is then crumpled into a small ball on the pin; you must be careful not to let the holes turn into rips as you do this.

The ball is positioned about a third of the way along the pin from the head. The point is stuck into a small cork and the pin is put in the jacket pocket.

In performing the effect, you proceed as described earlier, drawing the outline on another cigarette paper and handing it to the spectator to crumple up. Reaching into your pocket, you push the cork off the pin and bring the pin out at your fingertips.

The pin is held point upward between the thumb and the *second* finger; these conceal the impaled paper.

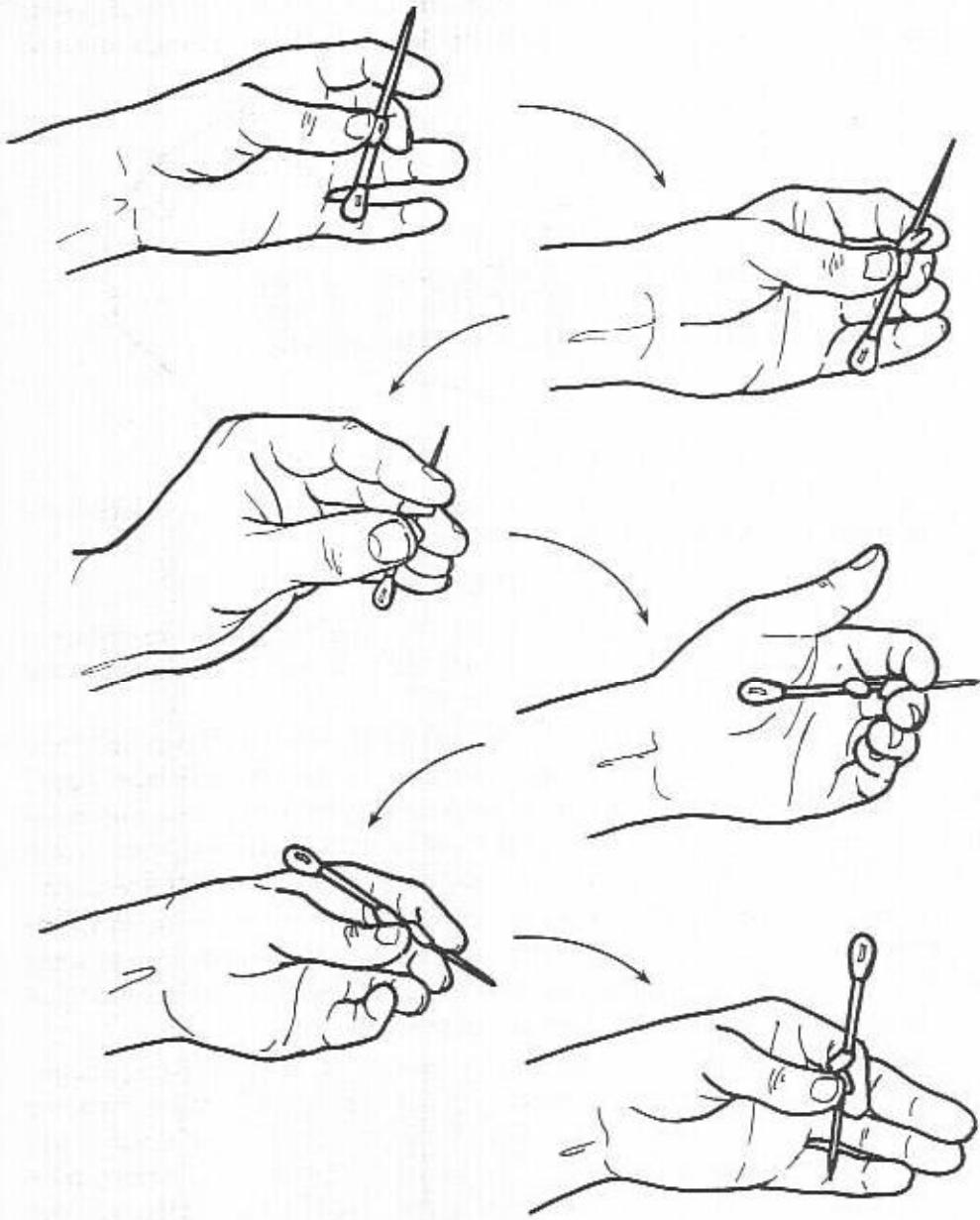
The spectator is requested to impale the paper she holds on the point of the pin; she does so, and you very openly push it down the shaft of the pin until it is just above the area gripped between thumb and second finger.

"We'll need the cork," you say, and you reach into the *opposite* pocket from that which holds the cork. As the empty hand does this, the hand holding the pin turns it around to a head-upward position, as follows: The first finger moves behind the pin and presses against it, clipping it between the two fingers; the thumb moves away, and now the pin is horizontal, pointing directly forward. The thumb moves underneath the rear part of the pin and pushes up, so that the head is on top and the point aimed at the floor.

The second finger takes the first finger's place, its tip pressing against the lower ball of paper, and the first finger lifts away slightly; the grip is now much as it was at the beginning—but what happens during the simple rotation described is that your paper is revealed and the one impaled by the spectator is now concealed between the thumb and second finger.

⁷Page 22.

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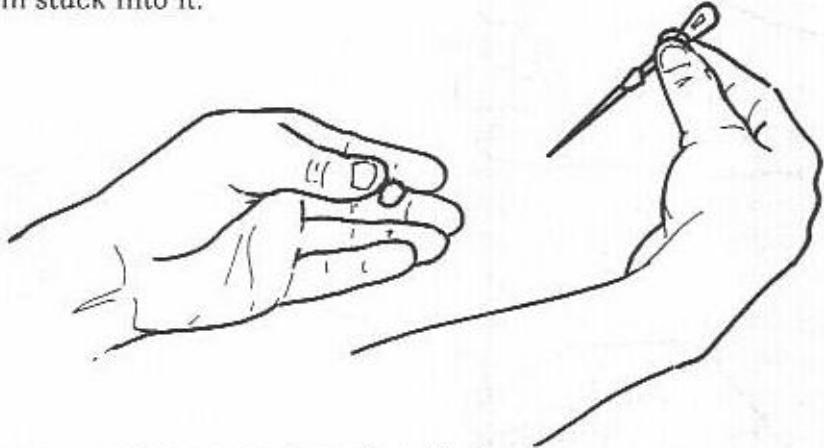
(Note that there is a *reason* for this move; if you are going to stick the pin down into something you have to turn it point downward.)

The move can hardly be called that; it is very simple, much like a 'twiddling', and is almost automatic in action.

Your other hand comes out of the pocket empty. 'Not in there,' you may comment under your breath. You take the pin in this hand, now grasping it by the head, and simply pull it away from the other hand, leaving the

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spectator's paper concealed between fingers and thumb. The hand goes to the pocket, drops the paper and picks up the cork; this is brought out and the pin stuck into it.



The presentation concludes as described.

NOTES

In transferring the pin from hand to hand, you must keep your attention *on the pin*, holding it up prominently and 'studying' it as your other hand ditches the stolen paper and obtains the cork.

It is, of course, possible to use this switch as the way of accomplishing a spirit-writing routine—but when such routines involve small balls of paper they tend to clearly suggest the idea of a switch. It would be a pity to waste this method on an effect where it is an obvious thought—and also unnecessary, since I will be describing three spirit-writing routines in the next few pages.

Joe Givan has developed an interesting variation on this routine in which he draws a rough sketch of a hand on the paper, which is then balled and placed on the pin as usual. He divines the pain spots, and when he turns his hand over there are blood spots in the appropriate locations!

Givan has also come up with an alternative switch, in which the spectator takes the pin and impales the paper on it; Givan removes from his pocket a duplicate of the cork originally shown, which has impaled in it another pin loaded with the prepared paper. In pretending to stick the spectator's pin on the cork he actually disposes of it into a Topit, pivoting the hidden pin into view. (Joe comments that while this latter switch has some advantages, he finds mine more practical for most situations and continues to use it.)

Givan's routine and handling will be found in his MAGIC FROM THE ATTIC under the title *A Bloody Good Point!*

CREDITS

As indicated in text.

ELEMENTEERIE

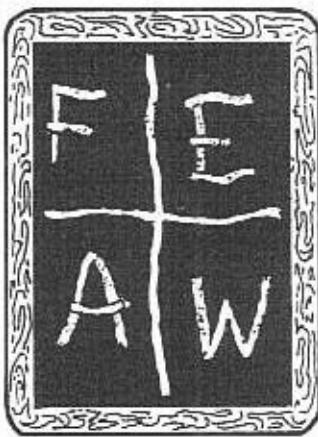
EFFECT

From a large (ten by thirteen inch) envelope you remove a school slate and chalk. Handing the envelope to a spectator, you ask her to remove the other contents. She takes out four smaller envelopes (about five by eight inches); you take back the large envelope and tell her to mix the smaller ones.

This done, she is to retain one and hand the other three to people seated nearby; as she does this you temporarily replace the slate in the large envelope.

The spectators are instructed to open their envelopes and take out what's inside; each envelope contains a white card picturing one of the four alchemical elements—*Fire, Earth, Air* and *Water*—on one side, and the appropriate initial—F, E, A, W—on the other.

You ask that the spectators choose one of their number to be the 'control' subject, saying you will explain this in a moment. As this is being done you remove the slate from the envelope and divide it into four squares by drawing two crossing lines.



The slate is handed to the spectators, and each is asked to inscribe the appropriate letter for his or her element in any one of the squares. When this has been done you ask the spectator chosen as control to be seated for a moment.

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Replacing the slate in the envelope and placing it on an easel, you go to each of the three standing spectators in turn and ask them to visualize a large X appearing on the letter-element they hold; the card is used to assist in this visualizing.

Needless to say, when the slate is removed from the envelope, three large X's cross out three of the letters; the one left untouched is, of course, that of the 'control'.

METHOD

Before describing the working, I do want to point out that (a) the spectators handle both slate and envelope at various points in the routine; (b) there is no force of any kind, and no restriction as to where on the slate the spectators should place the letters; and (c) the X's appear over the spectators' own handwriting.

I'd also like to point out that while it takes several paragraphs to *describe* the effect, it actually plays in very straightforward fashion.

As I have indicated, the element cards have large letters on their opposite sides, so you know immediately after the choice has been made which element has been selected. (If you desire a more subtle way of getting this information, the four element cards may have the initial letters above the pictorial symbol on the face; in this case you mark the backs.)

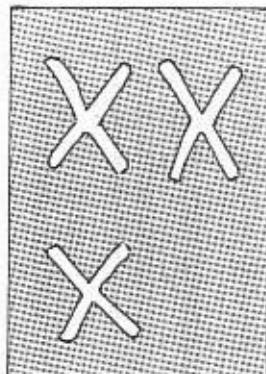
The X's are made to appear by means of a *transparent* plastic flap. This flap must have a matte surface which will take chalk; you can accomplish this by rubbing the surface with steel wool, spraying heavily with matte-finish (obtainable at artists' supply stores), or a combination of the two.

The X's are drawn in three of the four quarters of the flap.

This flap is on the slate in the envelope at the start of the routine, and you remove them together before handing the envelope to the spectator. You temporarily replace the slate and flap in the envelope as the card distribution and selection is being done, and then remove the slate only.

After the spectators have drawn the four initials, you replace the slate in the envelope. As a trial will show, this can be done in such a way as to leave any one of the four letters in the unmarked quadrant of the flap—depending on (a) which *end* of the slate goes into the envelope first and (b) on which *side* of the flap the slate is placed (of course it is always positioned so that the side bearing the letters goes against the flap).

The rest is presentation.



GRYMWYR

NOTES

The envelope should be of heavy manila paper and completely opaque.

You can, of course, eliminate the initials completely, having the spectators draw in the pictures instead. I do not recommend this, since it is a little bit more 'abstract'—and thus not quite as clear to the audience.

CREDITS

The basic effect is Annemann's *Slates And Aces*⁸; Peter Warlock described a routine⁹ using two transparent flaps. I have eliminated the extra flap and added the 'Element' presentation.

⁸THE INCORPORATED STRANGE SECRETS, page 14.

⁹Linking Ring, Vol. 28, No. 8; Oct. 1948; page 54.

PASTELL

In a reversal of my usual procedure, I am here describing presentation and leaving exact methodology up to you; while I will suggest some possible approaches for accomplishing the effect, the final choice will be yours.

EFFECT

You begin by a brief description of the famous Bridey Murphy case, in which an American housewife, under hypnosis, gave a description of a previous life in Ireland. It is, you point out, very difficult to isolate just what's happening in such a situation—is the subject really describing his or her own experience in a previous incarnation? Or is it possible that the subject is drawing information telepathically from some living person?

Obtaining a young lady as a subject, you make it clear that you are not going to place her in a deep hypnotic state—that she will be fully aware of all that goes on during the experiment.

You have her sit comfortably and relax, closing her eyes and breathing slowly and deeply. You explain to her that she is going to imagine herself drifting back in time, to long before her birth...to another country, another time, another...life...

...gently you ask her what year it is in the life she is experiencing, what country she is in; her name in this earlier life and perhaps one or two things about her daily existence. As she responds to these questions you note them down on a pad.

Now you bring her 'forward' in time to the present—have her open her eyes, relax a few moments, and then stand up. As she does so you *very briefly* recap what has taken place, and point out that there are those who might accept it as evidence of reincarnation.

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Such is, you say, not the case—and to prove your point you remove your pocket secretary and from it extract an envelope (perhaps marked *reincarnation test protocol*, or something similar).

You say that your subject has picked up the information she gave not from the past but from your own mind—*this* information (you indicate the envelope).

Opening the envelope, you hand the paper within to the subject and ask her to read it aloud. The description tallies almost exactly with the information she has given only a few moments before.

METHOD

Obviously this is simply a presentation for the age-old Swami Test in which the mentalist predicts three or four items to be subsequently called out by the spectators. There must be dozens of methods available for this particular effect—Annemann's *My Own Swami Test*¹⁰ and *A Prophecy Of The Koran*¹¹, Peter Warlock's *30th Century Prophecy*¹² and *Think As I Think*¹³, Rice's *Direct Prediction*¹⁴—and marketed methods such as Grimmond's *Triple Forecast*, Alan Shaxon's *Confabulation* and so on. You should have no trouble finding an approach that suits your style of working. If none of the above seem right, a look through the relevant listings of Jack Potter's *MASTER INDEX TO MAGIC IN PRINT*, published by Micky Hades, should give you more than enough possibilities.

(NOTE 1993: One problem with the above presentation is that its subtext is supposed 'disproof' of evidence for reincarnation—and, as it happens, reincarnation is to many an appealing philosophy; the majority of the world's population believes in it to greater or lesser degrees. It is never a terrific idea to go directly against your audience's belief system unless you have a compelling reason to the contrary.)

(You might instead get your subject on stage—study her for a few moments and then say you're going to try to discern something about her past—something even *she* doesn't know... yet.)

An alternate approach to the same general effect would be to state that as the audience was coming in you sensed the presence of someone you had known in a previous life, a very special person; naturally, you say, the lady is unaware of this previous relationship, so you shall now proceed to demonstrate the truth of your statement...

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¹⁰The Jinx, No. 37; Oct. 1937; page 249.

¹¹Annemann's BOOK WITHOUT A NAME, page 58.

¹²In his PATTERNS FOR PSYCHICS and later in *Pentagram*, Vol 11, No. 8; page 60.

¹³Commercially marketed in his Modes For Mentalists series and later reprinted under the title *Thoughts Are Yours* in *New Pentagram*, Vol. 17, No. 11; Jan. 1986; page 86.

¹⁴Ganson's MAGIC OF THE MIND, page 12.

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...the astute reader will appreciate that this way of handling the presentation may be useful in garnering rewards beyond the show itself...

...of course, if your chosen subject doesn't want to take part it pretty much makes hash of your lead-in and so you have to omit the effect completely—but the specific situation may be worth the small risk.

Let your conscience be your guide.

(P)OCEAN

EFFECT

You hand the spectator a three-by-five-inch index card of the unlined variety; six lines have been ruled equidistantly along the longer dimension of the card. Giving him a pencil, you tell him to write the first name of someone he cares about on *any* of the six lines; this done, he is to fill in the other lines with any names he wishes. (You do not, of course, see what he writes at this point.)

As he does this you display the other two items to be used in the test; the first is a flat glass bottle, in the usual tablet bottle shape, and it is filled with a greenish liquid which you explain is nothing more or less than sea water.

The other object is a sculptured amulet of odd design; it is strung on a cord. As you remove it from the cord you say that, difficult as it may be to believe, you have it on good authority that this amulet is an artifact from the lost and fabled kingdom of Atlantis. The Atlantean priests who made these amulets were widely supposed to have odd powers—and it may be that this amulet retains something of that power.

You remove the cap or cork from the bottle and drop the amulet within; the bottle is then resealed. The amulet now floats at the top of the water, just breaking the surface.

Taking the index card from the spectator, you point out that no one other than the spectator himself could know what name among the six is the one important to him. No person could know—but perhaps the amulet does.

You pick the bottle up and hold it in your hand so that the card, held behind, is visible through the water. For several moments nothing happens—and then the amulet slowly sinks to the bottom of the bottle.

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Now, slowly, the amulet begins to rise—but then comes to a halt, suspended between the bottom and the surface. You have anyone read—through the bottle—the name where the amulet has halted. It is, of course, the thought-of name.

METHOD

Again we are dealing with an old classic of mentalism—the *Dead Name Test*—and combining it with another old item, a scientific novelty.

In making his list of names, the spectator writes his thought-of name first, on any of the six lines; your task, therefore, is to differentiate that writing from the later names.

There are several approaches to this:

The pencil, of soft lead, can be sharpened to a very fine point; one name—the first written—will begin with a thin line, the others will not.

The point of the pencil can be coated with mascara (if black) or lipstick (if red); this preparation, suggested by an idea of Eddie Joseph's, will result in a slight smear across the beginning of the first name if finger or thumb is swept down the list.

Ned Rutledge marketed an interesting and practical approach to the problem under the title *Voice Print*.

The amulet is made of clay formed around a small sealed glass or plastic vial. The air in the vial provides buoyancy, and the clay provides ballast.

You will have to experiment with the proper amount of clay. The best way to do this is to put too much on, so that the amulet sinks; allow the clay to harden. (Note: you *must* use self-hardening clay; *baking will cause the vial to explode*.)

Once the clay sets, you must sand away bits of it until the amulet is just barely buoyant.

The water in the bottle is *not*, in fact, sea water—just tap water with a bit of green food-coloring added; salt water is too buoyant for our purposes.

If all this is properly prepared, you will find that once the amulet is in the bottle and the cap or cork is in place (this must be an airtight seal), you can control the amulet's position by *gently* squeezing the bottle—yes, you *can* squeeze a glass bottle.

You do *not* want to squeeze it hard since (a) the strain will be visible to the spectators and (b) you might actually crush the bottle in your hand—and



GRYMWYR

entertaining as that may be to your audience, between the blood, water and food-coloring it's apt to get a bit messy.

No; it is better to keep experimenting until a slight bit of pressure controls the amulet's vertical position in the bottle.

(Note: rather than using a cork, you should use a snap-on or screw-on cap for the bottle—since in pushing in a cork you would alter the air pressure in the bottle.)

One logical touch about this presentation is that holding the card behind the bottle gives you a perfectly good reason *for holding* the bottle.

The working of the routine should now be clear; on receiving the card back from the spectator you note which is the thought-of name—by means of one of the cueing methods discussed earlier—and then control the amulet to stop at the name as indicated in the description of the effect.

Do not rush the final part of the effect—this is, after all, a demonstration of magickal power or (at the very least) psychokinesis, and plays much more realistically and dramatically if you take a little time with it in presentation.

CREDITS

As indicated in text.

ALEXICON

EFFECT

A small packet of cards rests on the table. You ask a spectator seated across from you to name any famous person who is no longer living. When this has been done you explain that you will attempt an experiment in psychography—spirit-writing.

Picking up the packet of cards, you spread them to show four backs. Squaring the packet, you turn them face up and thus reveal the face card of the packet; it bears a large letter D in the center, and smaller D's in the index corners. (It is, in fact, a standard alphabet or Lexicon™ card.)

You take this face card in the other hand; an E now shows on the face of the packet. This is taken into the other hand on top of the D already there and jogged forward slightly, so that from the spectator's point of view she can read the index D and E.

The next card is an A, followed by a final D; these two cards are taken one by one into the other hand and also jogged forward, so that at the finish the spectator reads from top to bottom the word D-E-A-D.

The packet is squared and turned face down; you place it in the spectator's hand and put a pen or pencil on top of the cards.

After a suitable pause you ask the spectator to remove the pen and turn the top card over. She does so and finds the specified name scrawled across the face of the card.

METHOD

Needed for this are four alphabet or Lexicon cards—two D's, an E and an A—and two matching pens or pencils that will write on the card surface. One of these pens, along with one of the D cards, is in your lap.

The other pen is in view on the table; nearby is the packet of three cards, face down, in the order E-D-A from top to bottom.

GRYMWYR

When the name is mentioned you write it across the face of the card in your lap as you talk about psychography; you then palm this card and add it to the top of the packet as you pick it up from the table.

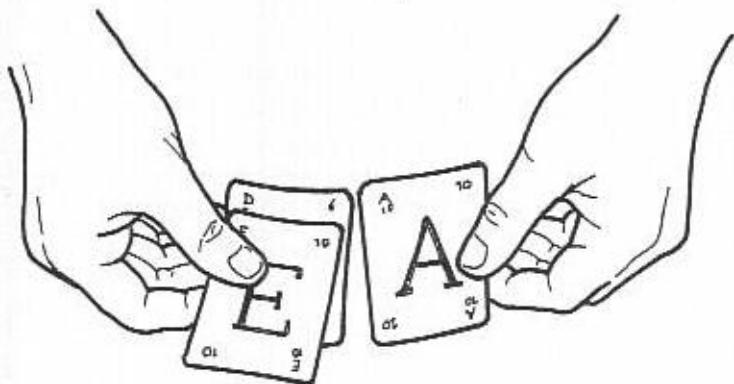
You count the cards from hand to hand without disturbing their order—except that the last card (the A) is placed on *top* of the face-down packet.

The packet is now turned face up; the order of the cards *from the face* is: plain D, E, D with signature, and A.

You now execute an Elmsley count (also known as the ghost count or four-as-four count) with a slight but important difference:

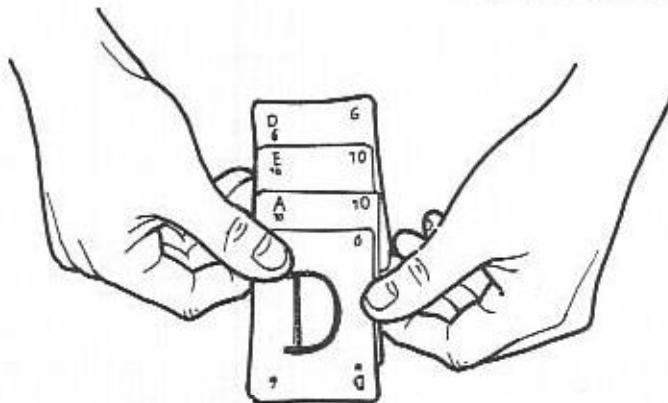
With the packet held face up in the left hand, you take the D in your right, exhibiting the full face of this card.

Your right hand returns to the left-hand packet, the D in your right hand now being left on the bottom of the packet as the two top cards are taken; *immediately* this has been done the upper card (the E) is pushed forward slightly by the right thumb.



If this has been done correctly, the index of the lower card—the signed D—is now visible, and from the point of view of the spectator it has never been out of sight.

The A and D are taken singly into the right hand as per the usual count; the packet is turned face down and the routine concluded as indicated in *Effect*.



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The use of the letter cards and this handling gives a very strong illusion to the count; try this in front of a mirror and you'll see what I mean.

CREDITS

The Elmsley count is the invention of Alex Elmsley, of course, as is the idea of something appearing on letter cards¹⁵.

¹⁵See his *What Card?*, a variation of Dr. Jaks' *Four Blacks* which was in turn a variation on Dr. Daley's *Ultra Slate Message* from *The Jinx*, 1935-1936 Winter Special; page 88.

HALLOWGRAM

Like *Alexicon*, this was inspired by Elmsley's What Card? effect; it is a more direct adaptation of that method.

EFFECT

The name of some deceased celebrity having been chosen by some means or other, you show a packet of four cards which have letters printed on both sides. As you show each of the eight surfaces in turn, the letters spell out the phrase D-E-A-D-N-A-M-E. Except for the letters the cards are blank.

One of the four cards is chosen; when, presently, it is turned over, it proves to have the chosen name signed across the other side.

METHOD

The four two-faced cards are as follows: D backed by E, A/N, A/D and M/E. They are in that order from top to bottom of the packet, so that if you spread them you will see D-A-A-M; the lowermost of the two A's has the name to be forced signed across it.

The upper face of the top card is shown to be a D; it is turned over and the E is shown; the card is then dealt to the table. The upper A surface of the next card is shown; a double lift and turnover is now executed to show a D. This card, with the A bearing the signature on its underside, is now dealt to the table beside the first card.

(Note: in doing this turnover you 'cheat' the packet slightly so the spectator gets only the slightest glimpse of the card beneath the double. You do this by bringing the double over to the right so that its left edge is next to the right edge of the single card beneath, and then flip the double over. This is necessary because they will see an M, and a moment later when the single

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card is dealt off it will be an N. Since the left sides of both letters are identical, a partial view of the left side of the lower card—which is all the spectator will see if the cards are held at the proper angle as you turn the double—will be permissible.)

The remaining two cards are shown in like manner to spell out the word N-A-M-E. The card bearing the signature is now forced by a standard equivoque, and the effect brought to its conclusion.

NOTES

As with *Alexicon*, it is possible to do a version of this where a name is freely chosen, the card written on in the lap and then loaded into the packet; there are a few technical difficulties but they are not insurmountable. The reason I do not bother to describe such a handling is that I think the major strength of this routine lies in the message being an actual *signature*—rather than, as in *Alexicon*, simply a ‘spirit-writing’ of the name—and unless you have inherited the skills of Dr. Jaks, and have memorized a large number of signatures, it isn’t really practical to approach this effect on a free-choice basis.

The actual force does not matter, as long as it is short and sweet—a deck of movie-star cards could be used, or a typed list applied to the *Clip-Line* principle (see *Clippoline*, page 25); for other possibilities see Annemann’s 202 METHODS OF FORCING. This aspect of the routine should not present any problems to the astute performer.

An alternative approach would be to have a number of cards in an index, with various signatures—but a good force is still the most practical procedure.

CREDITS

See *supra*.

ZODIAXIS

In the recent past a number of items based on the Annemann *Weird Wire* principle¹⁶ have appeared on the magical market—some with outlandish prices, some with outlandish methodology, some with both. Variation on variation has appeared (with a Mammonic subtext of price undercutting), and most of these routines have suffered from what's called in the writing trade "... having God sit in your lap." To a novelist this means building a plot on unlikely and/or unbelievable coincidences; in mentalism it means expecting that the spectators, either singly or as a committee, will do *exactly* as you tell them. Sometimes they do, more often they don't—and to attempt routines where this has to happen four, five and six times requires an optimism which itself borders on the supernatural.

No; such things usually are just not practical. In the original Annemann effect only one phase depended on phrasing or suchlike, the rest having to do with actions in which the spectator was specifically instructed by the mentalist. In what follows we have kept very much to the original Annemann pattern.

EFFECT

Perhaps after doing some astrologically-themed effect in which a spectator's birthsign or birthdate is revealed, you mention that you are acquainted with an astrologer who can almost always tell a person's astrological sign. Strangely enough, you continue, she can often do this *over the phone*.

One of the spectators whose sign is known, having been given the astrologer's name and number *before* revealing his or her sign, calls up this Mistress of the Zodiac—and is given

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¹⁶The Jinx, No. 89, page 558.

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a brief character reading in the course of which she correctly identifies the subject's birthsign.

METHOD

By whether the spectator is told to ask *when was I born* or, alternatively, *what's my sign*, the first or last six signs are indicated; by further responses as to whether the sign was written on a paper, where the paper is, whether it has been burnt, etc., the specific sign is coded. In chart form it looks like this:

WHEN WAS I BORN?:	1	2	3	4	5	6					
WHAT'S MY SIGN?:					7	8	9	10	11	12	
WRITTEN ON PAPER:	1	2	3			7	8	9			
NOT ON PAPER:				4	5	6		10	11	12	
PAPER AT PHONE:	1					7					
—NOT AT PHONE:		2				8					
—WRITTEN/BURNT:			3			9					
BLANK PAPER AT PHONE:				4			10				
BLANK PAPER NOT READY:					5			11			
TRY WITHOUT PAPER:					6			12			

This chart and the numbers (which of course stand for the signs: 1 is Aries, 2 is Taurus, etc.) may seem a bit confusing at first, but the procedure is really quite simple. When called, the astrologer immediately narrows the field from twelve to six by the *way* the question is put to her—*birthsign* or *when born*.

She then *always* asks the person to write the sign down on a piece of paper.

If the spectator indicates that this has already been done, he's requested to look at the paper, and is immediately asked if that has been done.

Presuming both these requests get immediate positive response, the astrologer knows that the sign had previously been written on a piece of paper which is right there with the caller at the phone.

Coupling this with the way the original question was put (for example: *When was I born?*), the astrologer knows that the sign in question is ARIES.

Let us take another example:

266 Our subject is a SAGITTARIUS, the ninth sign of the zodiac. We tell the subject to draw the sign (or write its name) on a piece of paper—to stare at it for a few moments and to concentrate—and then to burn the paper.

The subject calls the astrologer and asks (as we have indicated he should) what sign he was born under. The astrologer asks the subject to write down the sign and is told that this has been done.

'Fine,' responds the astrologer, *'look at it and concentrate on it.'* The subject responds that the paper has been burnt. '*That's all right,*' soothes the astrologer, *'just make a mental image of it.'*

GRYMWYR

Knowing from the *sign* question that the birthsign is in the last half of the zodiac, and that a paper written and then burnt indicates either the third or ninth signs, the astrologer knows the sign in question must be SAGITTARIUS.

The varying procedures should now, I think, be clear. In the case of VIRGO and PISCES, the sixth and twelfth signs, you make sure that no paper is anywhere handy. When the subject asks for some, you *pantomime*—with a shrug and shake of the head—that there isn't any paper and that the astrologer should try without it.

On no account must you make a *verbal* response, as some people will assume you could code the information in that way.

One more example:

The sign is TAURUS. You ask the spectator to draw the sign, to concentrate on it, and then you take the slip from him and pocket it. You instruct the subject to call the astrologer and ask *when born*.

When the astrologer asks the person to write down the sign, she is told that this has been done—but when she asks the spectator to look at it, there is a pause while the subject gets the slip from you. The combination of *when born*—drawn on paper—not at phone brings the astrologer directly to No. 2—the sign of TAURUS.

NOTES

Instead of the *when born-what sign* questions, you may wish to instruct the spectator to ask either:

What's my zodiac sign?

or

What's my astrological sign?

I have tried this a few times, and it's worked, but I do not have as much faith in it as in my original set of questions—you'll have to try them out and see which works best for you.

This first question is, in fact, the *only* place where the coding can go astray—and even when this happens, the astrologer knows it can only be one of two possibilities.

She can handle such a situation this way:

Beginning with a brief reading, she can segue into a line like, "... *you tend generally to get along well with the people around you. Virgo...*" At this point she pauses briefly; if this is the spectator's sign they will usually respond at this point; if they don't, she continues, "... *that's the sign you have some trouble with—you do have conflicts with many of those born under that sign. You get along very well with Scorpios, on the other hand—those are some of the characteristics of your sign, which I sense is PISCES.*"

While the above is not completely valid astrology, it will sound reasonable to the subject on the phone.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

Tarotell

It should be noted that, by determining whether a man or woman makes the call, you can extend the possibilities to be covered to twenty-four—and this means that you can code any one of the twenty-two cards in the Greater Arcana of the Tarot pack. If you use this, an approach to controlling whether the man or woman goes to the phone is to say, "All right, which of you wants to do the test?"...

...and you simply interpret *do the test* as meaning (a) to make the phone call or (b) choose the card.

CREDITS

The *Weird Wire* principle is, as noted, Annemann's; the telephone trick itself was invented by the author of GREATER MAGIC—John Northern Hilliard¹⁷.

¹⁷See *The Sphinx*, Vol. 3, No. 12; Feb. 1905; page 150.

MAILEFACTOR

What follows is an extremely peculiar publicity effect; as you will see, it is capable of a number of variations.

EFFECT

You have, let us suppose, just had lunch with a columnist or reporter. As a capper to the interview he or she has conducted, you'd like to do something that will remind the newsperson in days to come of your abilities.

From your pocket secretary you extract a picture postcard; the address side is of the usual kind—half the space for a message, the other half for the address.

The other side is a photograph of you, standing (let us say) in your library.

Resting the postcard against the pocket secretary to provide a writing surface, you have the newsperson self-address the card to his or her workplace.

(It should be noted here that you do this *outside* the restaurant and away from the tables—and near a mailbox.)

Once the person has addressed the card, you show the picture side once more and then very openly put it into the mailbox. The address, written by the person, is clearly visible as you do this and there is no question that the card actually goes in...

...but when the newsperson receives the card, you are *gone* from the picture—only an empty library room, with perhaps a vague outline of you...

METHOD

Strong as this effect is, the method is nothing very arcane or complex. The postcard with your picture on it you address to *yourself*—this should be done with light pencil or ink pen, not a ball-point, because you don't want the impression showing through to the picture side.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

This postcard is waxed on its address side to the face of a second postcard; this face bears a picture of the empty library room.

(Note: You spread the wax smoothly over the entire surface of the side of the card which bears your address; the best way to do this is with a 'waxer' used in layout work by commercial artists. The card the newperson gets may feel a bit tacky on the photo side, but that will be assumed to be an effect of the printing. Do *not* use blobs of wax which might stick to the card the newperson receives and thus give the game away.)

(There are now also available devices which use the adhesive employed on Post-It™ notes; the one I use is called DryLine™. You may wish to experiment with this as an alternative to wax.)

In working—you show the face side of the double card, turn it over and have the person address it. As you are providing the backing surface with your own pocket secretary or notebook, it is perfectly logical to hold the card against it while the person does the writing.

You very openly drop this card into the mailbox—but as your hand goes out of the person's direct view, your finger or thumb separates the cards and lets them fall individually. Giving them a slight bend is usually all that's necessary to flick them apart.

That's it. The newperson receives the card showing the empty room, and the other card returns to you.

NOTES

There are any number of things that can be done with the basic idea.

You can, for example, have a picture of yourself holding a blank antique slate. After the card has been addressed and dropped in the mailbox you have the person make any kind of a selection—this is, of course, a force—and when they receive the postcard the selection has been written on the slate.

A variation of this would be a shot of you holding a crystal ball; the card on receipt shows a 'vision' within the crystal.

For some of these versions you might explore the possibility of a pocket index, containing double-card sets which cover a number of possibilities.

You might use the 'message-half' of the card to openly write a note for the person—saying where you'll be appearing, where he can reach you, etc. This will do two things: first, it will provide them with the information; second, it will establish the idea of writing on the card with the secretary or notebook as backing as being a normal procedure.

Another approach dispenses with the photograph altogether. In this version you draw a circle on the face of the (blank) postcard after the person has addressed it. The person writes anything in the circle—a word, for example—and, without looking at it, you drop it in the mailbox.

When they receive it, the writing in the circle has been crossed out with a heavy black marking pen—and a phone number has been written in below. When they call the number—you tell them the word.

GRYMWYR

Of course you have prepared their card by drawing a circle, writing anything inside, and completely obliterating it with heavy scribbles—and then writing in your phone number below.

The only danger of this is that—given the, ah, erratic service provided by the Post Office, the person may get their card and call you before you have received the other one and learned what the word is.

If this happens you can simply make the cryptic statement, *"Wait for the next postcard."* When your card arrives, note the word and put it on another postcard, in a suitable message, and send it along to them. Since they don't know just what you intended to do, this is a perfectly acceptable little mystery.

This effect can also be accomplished—but to my mind, not as cleanly—by an application of the Out-To-Lunch principle; here the newsperson would sign the address half of one side of the postcard. You would draw attention to the specific graphic on the other half of that side, and then remove the card, turning it over so you both could sign it. The card would then be dropped in the mailbox.

Yet another approach to this effect would be to use Phil Goldstein's method for his marketed *Symbol Simon* (later published in Sam Dalal's *Mantra*¹⁸); a revised version of this excellent effect is now available as *Pocket Packet*. Possessors of either effect will see how the working could be adapted to *Mailefactor*.

CREDITS

Tony Shiels described his *The Man Who Was Not There* in *Magick*¹⁹; this uses the idea of 'postal disappearance', but with a completely different method. The Reverend G.A. Arrowsmith may have been the first to use this general theme, with his *Vanishing By Remote Control* in ARROWSMITH'S ASSORTED MYSTERIES²⁰.

¹⁸Vol. 2, No. 13; April 1976; page 49.

¹⁹No. 86 (Oct. 19, 1973; page 427.

²⁰Page 16.

AMORTE

What follows might be called a 'full-Nelson'—since it is a combination of a gimmick first described by Bob Nelson in his *BOOK OF DARK SECRETS*²¹ with a concept marketed around 1946 by his brother Loel Nelson as *Spirit Kisses*²².

EFFECT

In the darkness of the séance room—or invocation chamber—the sitters are told that one of the entities to be summoned has an amorous streak—and that should it express its affections with a kiss, they must try not to become too disturbed.

Sure enough, in a few moments a gasp—or, often, a scream—indicates the presence of the fond phantasm. What the sitter feels is difficult to describe, but the sensation is perhaps that of the lightest brush of lips, combined with a dread clammy feeling.

METHOD

In fact the sitter has just been struck by a bubble filled with dry-ice vapor. Here's how we go about it:

From the end of a thin-walled cardboard box (approximately six by six by twelve inches in size) a two-inch hole is cut; it is positioned in the center of one of the short walls of the box. Inside the box—not too long before the demonstration—you place a lump of dry ice, which should be rested on a sheet of foil or plastic.

Also handy (it can be in the box until needed) is a jar of bubble mixture and plastic ring used for making the bubbles. This ring

²¹Page 31.

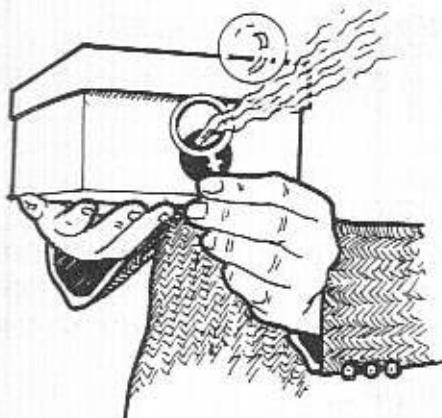
²²Later this was briefly described in Robert Nelson's *MORE MIRACLES OF MENTALISM*, page 20.

GRYMWYR

should be the largest you can find and should not be smaller than two inches across.

The box and its contents are stashed in the séance room in an easily accessible location.

In operation—in the darkness of the séance room the bubble formula is taken from the shoebox and the lid replaced; this should be done gently so as not to stir up the vapor.



The plastic ring is dipped in the bubble formula and held in front of the hole at one end of the box. You use your other hand to push in an inch or so on the opposite end of the box (with a quick in-out motion)—the flexibility of the cardboard permits this.

What happens—a good part of the time—is that the ball of ice-cold vapor thus ejected through the hole passes through the plastic ring and encloses itself in a bubble.

When the bubble bursts, on the face of whomever you've selected and thus at whom you have aimed the box, it creates a physical sensation that must be experienced to be believed.

NOTE

DO NOT DO THIS TO A PERSON WITH POOR NERVES OR HEART CONDITION. I am not kidding here—this is really quite frightening, for it operates on subtle psychophysiological levels; in effect the senses tell the person he has broken out in a cold sweat and therefore must in fact be terrified—and so he is. (This phenomenon is known in psychological circles as the James-Lange theory of emotion.)

I suggest that you have someone do this to *you*—so that you can see just how strong the effect is, even when you are expecting it.

You will have to experiment with various bubble solutions, and practice the aiming of the box, for best results.

CREDITS

As indicated in text.

POINTALISM

EFFECT

You show a copy of Arthur Edward Waite's PICTORIAL KEY TO THE TAROT which has a three-inch band of parchment paper running around it at the center. You also exhibit a Tarot pack—and two daggers.



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One of the daggers is thrust by a spectator into the book through the parchment strip. Leaving the dagger in position between two unknown pages, the remains of the parchment strip are torn away and discarded.

Another spectator thrusts the remaining dagger into the edge of the pack which you hold. You break the pack at this point and show the card 'cut' to—let us say it is the *Wheel of Fortune*.

When the book is opened at the point where the other dagger lies, the two pages thus revealed bear a picture and the description of the *Wheel of Fortune*.

GRYMWYR

METHOD

What this boils down to is simply a matter of two forces.

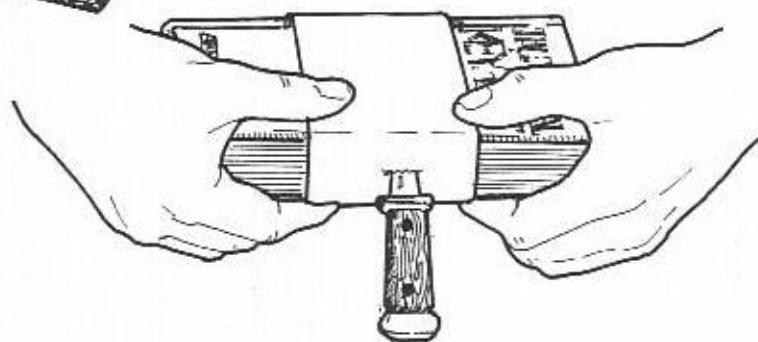
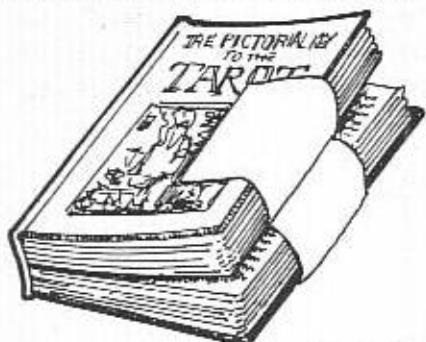
The first is the classic, and well-known, knife force; the card to be forced is about a third of the way down in the deck, and for our purposes has a short corner so you can obtain a break underneath it when you pick up the cards.

You have only to make sure that the blade goes in somewhere *below* your break; this done, you tilt the deck down and forward, so that the top of the deck more or less faces the spectators, and slide all the cards *above* the break a couple of inches forward. Grasping this packet at the forward end along with the knife blade, you press the blade against the face of the packet as you pull it free. You then display the face card of the packet with the knife blade against it.



The page force—with the knife—is done by having two celluloid slides; these have lips which catch around the front and back covers of the book, and are only a half inch or so narrower than the parchment band beneath which they lie. The two slides—which need not be more than three inches long—are tucked into the book to meet at the page desired.

When the knife is thrust through the parchment band and into the pages, the two strips of celluloid guide it between the desired pages; it can go nowhere else.



MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

The knife is then moved around to the top of the book and the parchment is pulled away and discarded, along with the guidestrips hidden within the waste paper.

That's it, but for the presentation.

NOTES

It is preferable that the knife blades be as flat as possible; it is also helpful if the knife to be used in the book force has a somewhat dulled point.

Regarding the book force—the farther out the front and back covers of the book extend from the level of the pages the more easily will the force be executed. The extra distance gives the two slides more of a slant in toward the center and thus the knife will ride in more smoothly.



CREDITS

The knife force with a deck of cards appears, uncredited, in ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARD TRICKS²³.

The knife force of the book page is the invention of Peter Warlock, who described it in the very first number of the original *Pentagram*²⁴. An extensive technical description of this force will be found in Boarde's MAINLY MENTAL: VOL. TWO under the title *Ex-Spear-ience*²⁵.

²³Page 384.

²⁴Oct. 1946; page 2.

²⁵Page 47.

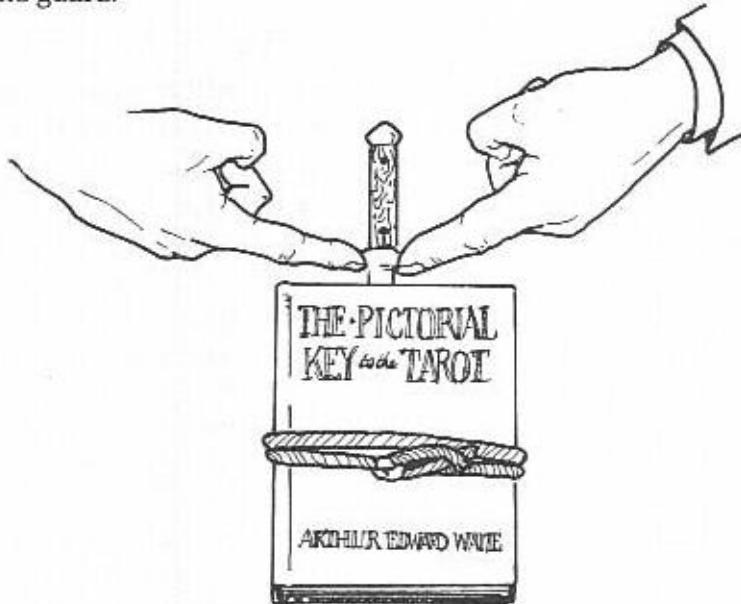
TAROTATE

This is intended as an alternate item to the preceding routine.

EFFECT

As before, a knife is thrust into a tome on the Tarot through a parchment band, the band being then discarded. The knife has been swung around to project from the top center of the book, and now you bind the book tightly around its center with a red cord.

Two spectators are asked to hold the dagger by each letting a fingertip support from below one of the two projecting sides of the guard.



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You pick up the Tarot pack and begin slowly to deal through it. At some point the knife and book suspended from the fingers of the two spectators begins to turn.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

At this point you stop your deal and turn face up the card at which you have stopped; it is *The Hanged Man*.

When the book is opened to the spot indicated by the knife, it is, of course, to the description of *The Hanged Man*.

METHOD

The knife force of the book page is as described in the preceding effect.

The card force can be handled in a number of ways:

- by second dealing (not easy with a Tarot pack!)
- by bringing the force card from its resting place on the bottom to the top of the pack, putting the stopped-at card on top of it and doing a double lift
- the same, except using a top change in place of the double lift
- using a Svengali or Tarbell Forcing Deck
- exchanging the card using Rick Johnsson's table switch (see page 768)...

...there are any number of methods for accomplishing this part of the effect.

The business with the two spectators balancing the dagger guard on their fingertips with the book suspended beneath is based on an ancient divination technique which used a key and a Bible. With the position given, an eventual imbalance in muscular tension will cause the knife (and book) to turn about ninety degrees.

NOTE

If you spray the blade of the knife with roughing fluid or Krylon™ or a similar type of matte finish spray, it will be much less likely to slide out when the book is suspended from it.

CREDITS

See *supra*.

QUINTASENSE

EFFECT

You talk of a Tarot counselor whom you know well, a person of rather spooky abilities in her line. "As a matter of fact," you say, "*the last time I visited her she wrote down a card reading—not for me, but for someone I would meet—and the person she described was...you!*" You indicate a particular young lady, and have her take a seat opposite you.

When she has done this, you remove from your pocket an envelope and hand it to her, telling her to put it away for the moment.

You remove from its case a packet of Tarot cards; this consists of twenty-five cards—the twenty-two cards of the Greater Arcana and three additional ones—*King of Wands, Queen of Cups* and *Ace of Swords*.

Giving the cards a casual mix, you have your 'sitter' give them three straight cuts; you give the cards one additional cut, and then deal them out in five rows of five cards each. The cards are dealt face down.

From your pocket you take five brass disks with curious and indecipherable inscriptions on them, explaining that the sitter will use them to determine the five cards from which the reading will be made—the rest of the cards being eliminated.

The sitter places a disk on any one of the cards; the other cards in the vertical and horizontal rows are removed. She does this three more times; after you have removed the cards in the rows ruled by her third choice, one card will remain. This she covers with the fifth disk, and you then draw the cards into a straight line and turn them face upward.

She is asked to open the Tarot-reader's prophecy and read it, which she does. It goes something like this:

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

YOUR FIRST CARD IS THE MAN OF POWER, WHO HOLDS IN HIS HAND THE SYMBOL OF HIS AUTHORITY... HE SYMBOLIZES ONE SOON TO HAVE BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE ON YOUR LIFE... THE NEXT CARD IS THAT OF THE SIGN OF POWER IN THE HEAVENS, WHICH EXERTS A FAVORABLE FORCE IN THE DAYS TO COME... YOUR THIRD CARD SYMBOLIZES A JOURNEY YOU MUST TAKE AS YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL WATCHES FROM ABOVE... THE FOURTH CARD WARNS YOU OF DANGER, OF TRAGEDY THAT MAY BEFALL IF YOU ARE INCAUTIOUS OR FOOLISH... AND YOUR FINAL CARD IS THAT OF THE WOMAN OF POWER WHO SYMBOLIZES THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE WHICH SHALL STRENGTHEN YOUR LIFE AND WORLD IN THE TIME TO COME... THE CARDS REVEAL A REWARDING FUTURE FOR YOU....

The reading, of course, accurately describes the five chosen cards.

METHOD

This is yet another application of the well-known matrix force.

The cards are divided into five groups of five.

Group One: *King of Wands, Emperor, Hermit, Hierophant, Magician.*

Group Two: *The Sun, The Moon, The Star, The Wheel of Fortune, Ace of Swords.*

Group Three: *The Lovers, Judgement, Temperance, The Chariot, The World.*

Group Four: *Death, The Hanged Man, The Devil, The Fool, The Tower.*

Group Five: *The High Priestess, Justice, The Empress, Strength, Queen of Cups.*

The packet is arranged sequentially, from Group One, on top, through Group Five, on the bottom; the order of the cards within each group is not important. The top card of the pack is a short card.

In performance, you give the cards any sort of simple false mix—a Charlier shuffle is fine—and then have the sitter cut them three times; these are individual straight cuts. You cut them once more, at the short card, and then deal them out in a five-by-five square so that the cards of Group One become the first vertical row, the cards of Group Two the second, etc. This should be done so the cards will end up representing Groups One-Two-Three-Four-Five from left to right from the spectator's view, not yours, as she will be looking at them. (See facing page.)

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If the matrix force is then executed as described in the effect, you will end up with five cards in order which will answer the descriptions given in the reading.

The reading can, of course, be made more elaborate; I have contented myself here with giving the basic structure.

CREDITS

The adding of three cards to make a twenty-five-card Tarot stack is an idea of John Snider's²⁶ Stephen Minch's *Fortunes Of A Wise Fool* in his BOOK OF

²⁶See *Superius* in Snider's THE SECRETUM TAROTUS OF ARKAAN; this stack also appeared in M-U-M, Vol. 67, No. 10; March 1978; page 23.

GRYMWYR



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THOTH²⁷ set me thinking along these lines. The matrix force was, as noted on page 225, described in Kraitchik's MATHEMATICAL RECREATIONS; subsequent work has been done on it by Walter B. Gibson, Stewart James, Mel Stover, Pavel, and Phil Goldstein among others.

²⁷Page 41.

CHRONOMADIC

This is the most elaborate routine to be found in this book, and as such I imagine very few people will do it. It requires a good deal of preparation and rehearsal, and you really can't do it more than two or three times over a span of years...

... still, for those of you who would like to create a psychic illusion in the grand manner, I offer the following.

EFFECT

You have decided to throw a party, and you invite a number of guests from varying social circles; not more than fifteen or so, however, for this is an intimate gathering.

One of your friends—let's call him Bob—has brought along his cousin Andrea, a vivacious young lady who is just visiting the area for a few days.

As the evening progresses, Andrea becomes fascinated by an old photograph mounted and framed on the wall. It shows a man in the dress of a century ago; he stands beside a chair and holds a watch. On the seat of the chair is a single rose.

At her insistence, you explain that the portrait is of a man named Daniel Dunglas Home, the greatest physical medium of the nineteenth century. You describe some of the 'tests' he performed, and tell of the séances he held in the homes of the royal and the wealthy.

Andrea is intrigued by all this, and suggests that it might be fun to hold a séance and try to contact the spirit of Home. You demur, and try to talk her out of it—with some assistance from Bob, who is not at all happy with this talk of ghosts and séances and seems a bit embarrassed by his cousin's enthusiasm.

But she persists—after all, you have done psychic research and know how to hold a séance, don't you?—and so you finally give in.

GRYMWYR

You say that first of all, to make sure that the spirit, if it appears, is legitimate, some tests have to be set. To do this you tear a few sheets of bond paper into quarters and distribute them, instructing your guests to write a question for the discarnate entity to answer.

Each person folds and retains his or her written question, and then you take everyone into the study or den where the séance will take place; the exact setup is determined by your living situation. The room is prepared with the help of your guests—the table is cleared, the windows covered or curtained to seal off the light, and so forth. When all is ready you have everyone take their seats around the table. Andrea is seated next to you; Bob, looking very annoyed but as though he is trying to conceal it, is at the other end of the table and near the light switch.

You give a mood-setting little talk about how the people are to act during the séance—they are not to speak, get up and move around, etc.—and then the mediumistic circle is formed by having each person rest both hands on the table and touch fingers with those of the person on each side.

At your instruction Bob leaves the circle for a moment to turn the lights out, then returns. Everyone settles in, gets comfortable, and the séance begins.

For several minutes nothing seems to happen, as you implore the spirit of Home to make its presence known. During this time Bob comments that nothing is going to happen, but Andrea shushes him.

Then, after a further wait, flickers of faint light begin to appear; there are rustling sounds; raps on the walls and on the floor.

You address the spirit, asking it to respond by raps—three for yes, two for no—and learn in this way that indeed it is the spirit of Home... or claims to be.

Andrea becomes very excited, even more so when the spirit of Home begins to speak in a whispery but cultured voice. He proceeds to answer the questions being thought of by those around the table, to greater or lesser degree.

Finally his attention is turned to Andrea. *"You, dear lady, did not think of a question as the others did—but there is one in your mind, is there not?"* the whispery voice inquires.

"Yes," responds Andrea, suddenly a bit frightened.

"For you I shall do more—much more—than give voice to your thoughts and your desires. I will give them reality."

The voice fades to silence, and for a long moment nothing happens. Then, abruptly, there is a frightened cry from Andrea.

Instantly Bob leaps from his chair and flicks on the lights. In the unaccustomed glare one thing is instantly evident.

Andrea is gone; vanished.

On the seat of her chair is the vague outline of a rose... in ashes.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

The sitter next to Andrea says that she felt Andrea's touch up to an instant before the lights went on; you confirm this.

Bob will have none of it; to him it is clearly a prank that the two of you have cooked up to play on him. Furious, he grabs his coat and departs.

You shake your head in puzzlement and turn to your other guests, saying, '*I'd begun to think it was a joke the two of them cooked up to play on me.*'

At some point—perhaps in the next few minutes, perhaps not for an hour—there is more excitement. Someone has taken another look at the picture. Now there is no rose on the chair; instead, a woman sits there, and rather than looking at a watch, Home is looking at her. Even in the period costume and hairstyle, it is unmistakably Andrea...

...and now you voice again your earlier thesis; it *must* have been set up by Bob and Andrea, you say—that's the only possible explanation.

Of course it is no explanation at all; you know that, and so do your guests; but you seem desperate to come up with some reasonable way to debunk what has happened.

And so the party comes to an end... and your guests leave with the thought in their minds: just what *did* happen?

METHOD

Andrea and Bob are, of course, ringers; there's a third person involved as well, who plays the part of Home and does a bit of the dirty work.

As to how the questions are learned—the coffee table and countertop on which the people rest their papers as they write are made of white high-impact styrene; the bond paper is in fact NCR™ paper and will leave a trace on the plastic which can be developed with graphite. (This is, of course, Henry Fields' excellent Fields Device principle.)

After the lights go out, Andrea breaks the circle for a brief moment, presumably to scoot her chair forward a bit; in fact she moves it *back*, and you reach across and touch the finger of the sitter next to her. This should only be a very light touch, since you don't want the spectator to notice the difference in skin texture or temperature.

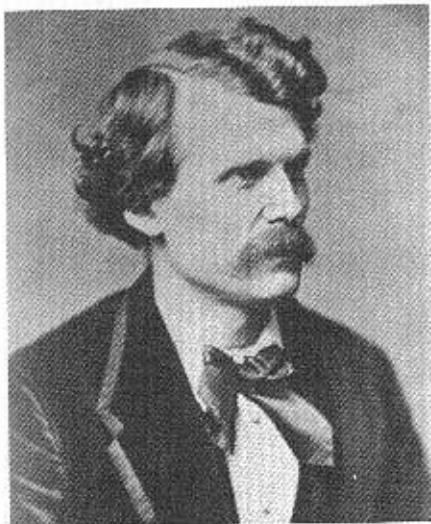
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From her purse Andrea, now free of the table, removes a small bottle filled with ash, and a simple thin card stencil which is cut to produce the outline of a flower. Having left the 'ash-flower' on the seat of her chair, she uses a bit of luminous cloth or card to create the spots of light; this can, if desired, be attached to any small telescopic rod (a walkie-talkie antenna rod, for example).

She also makes the raps, using a small but heavy piece of pipe rather than her fist to create the sounds.

When the voice of Home begins to speak, Andrea leaves the room by means of a 'light trap' arrangement. (By this is meant that one of the doors leading off the séance room connects with an adjacent room or corridor which has

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D.D. Home

also been light-proofed, and which has another exit.) Andrea enters it, closes the door, and makes her way through the other door and back to the living room.

While the early part of the séance is going on—before the advent of Home—your secret assistant has entered the house. He switches the photographs (these photographs can be made at a number of places which specialize in 'old-time' style portraits; the man in the pictures should bear at least a passing resemblance to D.D. Home). He then uses the graphite to develop the questions on the coffee-table and countertop, and notes these down on a pad.

When Andrea arrives from the séance room, this is his signal to begin the readings; this is done with a microphone that runs through the high-fidelity system to a good quality speaker in the séance room. The speaker is concealed atop some tall piece of furniture, which should be near the location where Andrea is seated.

While he is doing this, Andrea uses lighter fluid to remove the graphite impressions from the table and countertop. (Please note: she does this in the interests of efficiency and not because of male chauvinism!)

At the proper moment she comes to the microphone and gives her response to Home's question and then, a few moments later, a little shriek. (The microphone should be located well away from the entrance to the séance room; you don't want your spectators to hear the shriek both from the speakers and from outside the room.) The microphone is then turned off and concealed, the sound system is turned off, and your assistant and Andrea make their departure.

It's all over but the play-acting....

NOTES

The séance may include a few preliminary effects, with the lights on, before you go into the dark séance portion; this is up to you, but it shouldn't get too complicated.

Depending on how long this preliminary part of the séance lasts, your hidden assistant may have time enough to *tape* his answers onto a cassette; if you've a good quality recorder it need not run through your hi-fi system at all. Should this be done, the shriek can be prerecorded at a certain spot on the tape, its location being noted with the footage counter. Your assistant times his spiel to end just before that point is reached.

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The advantage of this is that your assistant and Andrea can be long gone by the time the séance actually concludes. It's a bit tricky to do, however, and don't really recommend it.

The two photographs should be aged somewhat—perhaps with an unobtrusive scratch, crack or stain on one which is duplicated on the other. This also applies to the frame—it is better to have two frames than to go to the trouble of taking one photo out and putting the other one in. Please bear in mind that the impression you want to create is that the *photograph has changed*—not that *the photographs have been changed!*

I think it best if the two people who play Bob and Andrea are *both* from out of town—you certainly don't want anyone to encounter her, and it is just as well if they don't have a chance to query him, either; he'd have to be made of stern stuff indeed not to eventually blow the gaff.

(This is, incidentally, why I indicate that you invite a number of people who don't know each other—so that Bob's presence will not seem particularly unusual.)

Many and various are the touches that can be added to the basic routine—but those I will leave up to you.

CREDITS

As noted in the text, the principle which is used in obtaining the question comes from the clipboard principle devised by Henry Fields²⁸.

²⁸Magick, No. 240; Sept. 14, 1979; page 1197.

CAULDRON

This final subsection is a mixture of concepts, hints and suggestions—stew strange to describe.

KEYSTOME

You have a large grimoire or book of spells—leather-bound and fitted with a hasp in which a padlock is secured. A protective spell keeps others from opening the book, you say, and proceed to prove it...

...by doing either Key-R-Rect, Keys Of Judah, or any of the other versions of the *Keys And Lock* routine best known by the Earl Der Biggers title Annemann applied to this effect—*Seven Keys To Baldpate*.

If you use the Key-R-Rect effect, I suggest you give the lock a dark copper finish (there are paint-on applications at most hardware stores); it will look more appropriate to the grimoire.

CHROMANTIC

This is for private readings done with a magickal slant:

You hand the sitter a book or chart of talismans. There are thirty or so, and beneath each of them is a line of calligraphic script indicating what problems and questions they assist in solving. The talismans are drawn in several colors.

Handing the spectator five pens of different colors and a slip of parchment, you instruct him to copy *exactly* the talisman relevant to his problem; only if the talisman is made by the person involved will it have any power.

You busy yourself with occult errands and tasks elsewhere as this is done, and when you return the sitter has—as per your instructions—concealed the talisman. Nevertheless, you know the question with which he is concerned.

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The pens are assigned values of one, two, four, eight and sixteen—for, let us say, red, blue, green, yellow and black respectively. You create the talismans with combinations of colors for the numbers three to thirty; however, it is not recommended that you use numbers *one, two, four, eight or sixteen*, since single-color talismans might make the principle too obvious. Given the values above, a talisman using the colors red and green would have a value of *five*.

You determine which pens have been used by starting with a mark on the cap of each pen precisely lined up with a mark on the body of the pen; you simply note, on your return, which of them have been misaligned.

Alternatively, a pen-holder built along the lines of the Quantimental stand could be used—and there are many other approaches; my purpose here is merely to provide the presentational angle.

The basic methodology is the creation of Len Belcher for his marketed Duplicated Thought; versions also appear in Hutchison's PSYCHOLOGICAL MYSTERIES²⁹, Becker's WORLD OF SUPER MENTALISM, BOOK TWO³⁰ and Goldstein's FIFTH³¹.

CANDLEABRA

It occurred to me that it would be nice to have a Quantimental type stand made up as a candelabrum; I mentioned this to Martin Lewis and he pointed out that his father Eric had done just that, some years before.

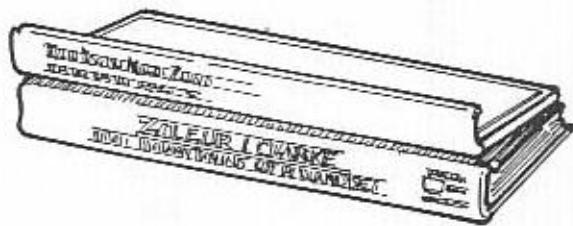
Indeed he had³², and this was not surprising, because I am beginning to suspect that Eric has invented everything. Oddly, however, candles were not used in the candelabrum, but rather small black plastic boxes.

It seems to me that an effective magickal presentation along the lines of a candle-burning ritual could involve such a candlestick, gaffed to reveal the order in which colored candles had been removed from their sconces. A metal disk in the base of the candle, and a magnetic ball which would roll down the arm of the candelabrum (inside it, of course) would not seem an insoluble problem in construction. I have, in fact, from time to time seen candelabra on sale which could well be altered in this way.

SHELFISH

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To the front of one hardbound book you glue the back and spine of another; the front cover and all pages have been very cleanly removed. This sits in your bookcase next to



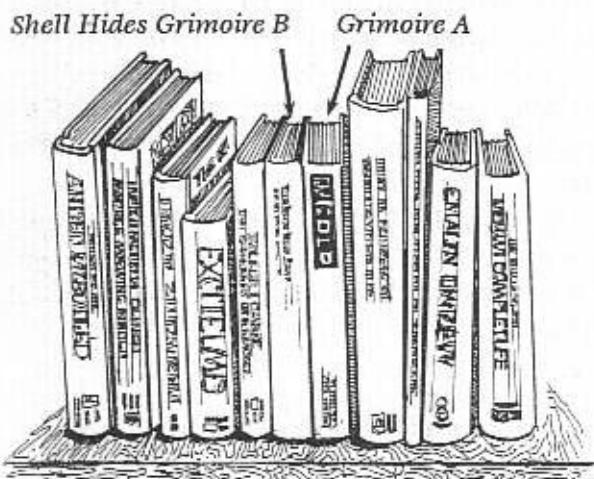
²⁹Page 32.

³⁰Page 169.

³¹Page 10.

³²See Whosgotwot Plus One in his THE CROWNING MIRACLES, page 203.

GRYMWYR



stocked shelf pushes *A* into the spot formerly occupied by the book you now hold (with a bit of help from you)—and the spine flips back to conceal *A* from view.

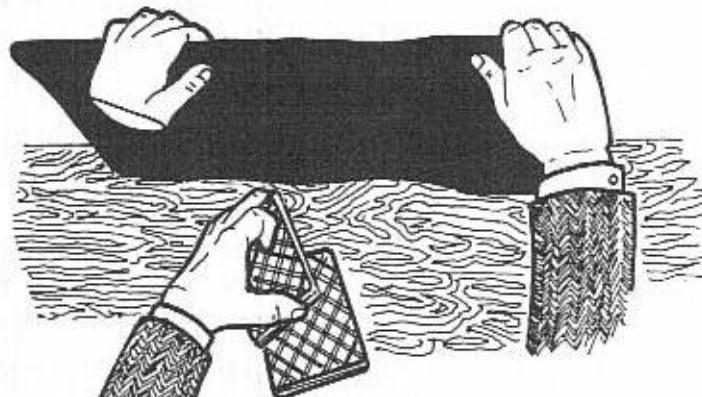
One point of caution: the gutted book which serves as the mask should be so lacking in interest—a political biography, for example—that virtually no one will be tempted to take it out and look at it.

(CREDIT NOTE: Recently [1990] I discovered that J.F. Orrin had somewhat anticipated me with a similar concept to the above; his version, which used a shell book and a special book rack and handling—appeared in *Magic Wand*³³.)

BACKHAND

Another idea for a switch, this time for just about anything that might be used in a ritual-magick routine.

The action is that you cover up the object with a heavy velvet drape; later on, when uncovered, it has been switched though you have apparently never touched it.



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³³No. 195; Oct.-Nov. 1942; page 145.

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The drawing tells the story. It's the old daylight-séance gag—the cloth has a stiff wire along one edge, and a fake hand attached at one end; this hand is concealed in the folds of cloth at the start. When you *slowly* drape the object, both hands seem to hold the cloth; actually it is supported by one hand while the other does the dirty work of switching the object for one concealed behind the table.

When you complete the draping action, the edge of the cloth you're holding drops below the rear edge of the table, and thus the gaff hangs out of sight. Later, when you uncover the object, you do so from the *front*, letting the cloth fold and bunch at the rear of the table.

PENTALLY

This is more an observation than a hint, and is aimed at those interested in stacking Tarot packs.

Attempts to adapt the Stebbins principle—adding three to get each succeeding value—will not work correctly. I merely wish to point out that this problem disappears if you change the increment from three to five, in which case it can be applied to a twenty-two-card Greater Arcana stack or a fourteen-card Lesser Arcana stack; in both cases an endless cycle through the values will be generated.

For twenty-two cards: 1-6-11-16-21-4-9-14-19-2-7-12-17-22-5-10-15-20-3-8-13-18.

For fourteen cards: 1-6-11-2-7-12-3-8-13-4-9-14-5-10.

Please note that with the latter stack the suits will not rotate correctly through the full deck of fifty-six Lesser Arcana cards, but rather into two twenty-eight-card banks. Thus if your suit rotation is Wands-Cups-Swords-Pentacles and you begin the stack with, say, the *Ace of Wands*, you will have to remember two exceptions—that the *Ten of Pentacles* is followed by the *Ace of Pentacles*, and likewise the *Ten of Wands* is followed by the *Ace of Wands*.

This is hardly a great demand on memory—but unless you are a stickler for authenticity, it is just as easy to remove either the four Pages or four Knights, and use the Stebbins add-three system.

DEMON KEY

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At some point in the midst of one of your more elaborate invocations, while the room is shrouded in darkness, a shape begins to appear. In the dim light the postulants note that it is no more than a foot tall...

...but it is hideous, a demon out of the worst nightmares of Bok or Finlay—and the unspeakable thing is *alive*; its eyes roll crazily in the reptilian face, the dragon-like tail lashes, its claws and fangs glitter threateningly...

...fortunately, as the dark descends again, you are able to use your powers to send this creature back to the Pit that gave it birth...

...actually, what you've got here is a spider monkey in drag.

GRYMWYR

To create the illusion you have two problems to solve:

The first is to find someone who can sculpt you a convincing demon³⁴, and then cast it in rubber pieces to create a prosthetic costume for the monkey (the rubber pieces being attached to a cloth structure)—the size of the costume being dictated by the size of your monkey...

...the second problem, as you may have guessed, is to persuade your monkey to wear it. Provided the costume is reasonably comfortable, as it must be, this should not be a major obstacle; the few small monkeys I have known personally were highly susceptible to bribery, and for sufficiently interesting and tasty goodies would do anything short of a major felony.

Obviously you won't do this effect unless you're willing and able to properly care for your pint-size primate, one not on any endangered species list... and I must warn you that some of these small monkeys have personalities that make the most troublesome human baby seem angelic by comparison...

...still, for those two or three of you who may use this thought, here it is.

(NOTE 1993: In the past decade views have changed on the use of animals in performance work; it is no longer as acceptable as it once was, and some members of the audience will be disturbed by anything they [rightly or wrongly] view as mistreatment of animals.

(In this particular case, these concerns may not be directly relevant; the *demon is only seen for a very few seconds, and should not be recognizable as any existing animal*. Indeed, the audience should not really be sure of just what they saw.

(On the technical side: if you are working with an assistant the monkey need not wear the outfit for longer than a few minutes at a time. Be that as it may, heed the cautions given earlier, and only do this with a monkey who is happy to do it, and for whom you are willing to provide proper care. This is not something to take lightly.)

³⁴Magazines like *Fangoria* sometimes carry advertisements from people who do this kind of work; they are also often discussed in *Cinefex* magazine. Please note that, done right, this is not going to be inexpensive.

CROSS-REFERENCE

Burning Questions—page 20
The Psychic Coercion of the Interrupted Schoolboy—page 41
Hellaphone—page 441
TranceScript—page 493
PsychoGraphitti—507
Flamulet—page 545
All effects in *SPYRYT*—page 565
Tri-Beaut—page 595
Tranceplant—page 625
Chronogram—page 632
Qwhite—page 660
Mutatile—page 663
Pyrotica—page 711
Synwitch—page 739
AstraSpeculum—page 780
SpiriTump—page 790
Hauntkerchief—page 792
Pullbox—page 792

OCTASM

[1982]

I USED TO ask laypersons what they thought of magicians, and when—not rarely—the response was negative, I asked them what they thought were the chief faults. Almost always I would get the same two answers:

"They talk too much."

"They all do the same tricks."

Regarding the first—well, "...*too much...*" is a relative judgment, of course; if someone is boring you stiff with what they're *doing*, then two sentences may be too much...

...and mentalism—which I was prudent enough not to ask about—is damn near *all talk...*

...but when Hal Holbrook (as Mark Twain) talks to us for two or three hours on a stage, we aren't bored; we're entranced.

The difference is partly in the material, but mostly in the execution, for consider: given the will in most spectators to believe, it should be easier for us to convince our audiences that we really read minds than for Holbrook to convince them he's Mark Twain. But Holbrook succeeds; often as not, we don't.

As Phil Goldstein says, "*Mentalism is easy to do—badly.*" You can take any layperson off the street and teach them the *technique*, the mechanical aspects of a simple but satisfactory mental act, in a week or so—so how difficult can it be? To be able to puzzle someone, with a trick or an act, is *no accomplishment at all*.

To entertain them, to create in them a sense of wonder, to, literally, enchant them—that's a tougher proposition, and even the very best in show business don't succeed in doing it every time. However, they *try every time*—which is part of the way you get to *be the best*.

Regarding the second objection (*"They all do the same tricks."*)—there is no excuse for it; none.

There is no reason why any two magicians or mentalists *ever* have to do the same effects. If, in accordance with Sturgeon's law, we throw out ninety percent of the magic in print or for sale from the dealers as being pure crap—and divide up the remaining ten percent among all the performers who ever perform in front of an audience—each one would still have more material than

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could be used in a lifetime. It has been said (by, I believe, Joe Laurie, Jr.) that there are more books on magic than on all other phases of show business put together.

The lame rationalizations of copyists—"Hey, that's an old trick!"... "C'mon, it's in Erdnase..." are clearly no more than that, as evidenced by the fact that you never see one of these clowns do something first. It's always *déjà vu*. They tootle pleasantly along, nonetheless, getting applause for lines they did not write or magic they neither found nor created, and think they're accomplishing something. I can't describe the copyist any better than did Nevil Maskelyne in OUR MAGIC:

"Yet, one cannot help coveting the blissful ignorance and the sublime impudence which enable such a man to pose as an artist. The possession of an intellect so obtuse, and a hide so pachydermatous, must confer upon the possessor a degree of self-satisfaction unknown to men of real ability."

I could go on about this at considerable length—and probably will, at some point—but I have yammered at you enough for now.

In what follows I have tried to cover as wide a range as possible, with particular emphasis on utility items—methods or approaches which can be applied to all kinds of mentalistic presentations. Several of the items I think of highly enough that they were originally planned as separate releases—and a couple of them are frankly gimcracky items—I'll tell you when we get to them!—that are, in spite of all, reasonably strong mentalism that can be made into something interesting... and, I hope, entertaining.

TAPINAGE

In *Magic Sounds*, No. 33¹, editor Alex Redans presented a challenge to his readers—an effect described by Joseph M. White entitled *Tape Transmission*. Readers were invited to devise solutions which answered Mr. White's several conditions, and what follows is my approach to the problem.

EFFECT

You show a tape recorder and ten or so cassettes—and a prediction, which you give to someone to hold. Someone takes each tape in turn and plays several seconds of it; each cassette has a different song. After each tape has been played it is rewound to the beginning. All the cassettes (which are unmarked) having been tested, are dropped in a bag and mixed.

Any spectator chooses one of the cassettes and plays it; it is, for example, Phil Collins singing *One More Night*. On the prediction being opened, it is seen that you have written: "The cassette you will select will be Phil Collins singing One More Night."

The conditions required by Mr. White are:

1. Each tape played has a different selection on it.
2. The spectator rewinds the tape to the beginning.
3. The spectators can see the recorder operating.
4. The spectator handles the tapes at all times.
5. The tapes are not switched.
6. The spectator has free choice of a cassette.
7. The spectator operates the recorder.
8. The prior written prediction is not switched.

My solution meets all the conditions proposed by Mr. White.

METHOD

In this solution the tape recorder is ungaffed; the cassettes, however, are prepared as follows:

Each cassette begins with the transparent 'leader' tape common to such cassettes—there then follows a short length of recording tape on which has been recorded a bit more than two bars of the *predicted* song—then another short length of the transparent leader tape—and then a recording of any one of the ten or so different songs. This will be a time-consuming but not overly difficult procedure; you'll need a splicing block and tape, leader, etc. You'll also need some information on how best to do the splicing; this is available in various booklets to be found in any well-stocked audio shop.

In performance, all the cassettes are set with the *second* piece of leader tape visible along the 'business edge' of the cassette; all the tapes thus appear to be set at the *beginning*.

The short length of recording tape on which the force song lies cannot be seen, as it occupies a very small space on the takeup reel.

As the spectator rewinds each tape after testing, the tape is of course wound back to the *actual* beginning of the cassette—and the difference in winding time from what it should be is no more than a second or two and is unnoticeable.

At this point, of course, any tape may be chosen and will play the force song.

NOTES

Mr. White's description presented this as a *prediction* feat. As I have noted elsewhere, predictions are the most difficult type of mental effect to sell as legitimate, and so we might consider an alternative approach.

Here you would cut off the little 'illustration panels' of the thin card insert which describes the original selection of cassettes from which you prepare your unmarked tapes. These panels are mounted on double-blank card stock to make them easier to handle.

298 | In performance, each card is with its appropriate cassette, and the cards are stacked to one side as the testing proceeds. You now have the cassettes mixed; while this is going on you force the card matching your force song on someone. This will be the 'target', you say.

Now, with your back turned to him, the spectator holds up each cassette in turn; suddenly, on the fourth or fifth tape, you stop him, saying, "That's it—play that one." Of course you are correct.

Here the test is presented as clairvoyance—quite as impressive and somewhat easier to accept than prophecy. Also it does not suggest a force the way predictions do.

OCTASM

Your patter line might discuss the gentleman at one time in the news because of his ability to identify records by looking at the grooves—you have, you say, taken things a bit further.

It should be noted that the basic version of the effect can be presented in a totally hands-off manner—as, indeed can the clairvoyance version, with the right force. I would suggest the Spackman force used in his marketed item *Voodoo*.

Important: Make sure the control buttons on the recorder are clearly labeled, but don't leave it at this; point them out to the assisting spectator. Otherwise, the wrong button could be pushed, which might quite possibly foul up the effect.

One of the cassettes, of course, is ungaffed, and can have the whole song—or album, for that matter—recorded on it; this one should have a mark you can spot. When it is chosen, you can let it play on for as long as you like.

A final note: you will, of course, stick to the more popular songs—and if they're other than Number One on the charts, as they say, try to pick for your force song one where *the title is part of the first line of the song*—so your audience will know you are right and there's no need to play the tape further.

CREDITS

As indicated in text.

ADAMSMYTH

Adam Smith was an eighteenth century economist, and as such gentlemen make predictions involving numbers from time to time, he seemed an appropriate pundit. (Too, his name conceals the identity of the pseudonymous author of the excellent *POWERS OF MIND*, also appropriate.) The titling of the following effect, however, has a more direct source—but you will have to skip down to the *Credits* to find it.

EFFECT

You show a packet of two dozen or so double-blank playing cards or index cards; on each side of each card is a different two-digit number. You hand the cards to a spectator for a thorough mixing.

This done, he hands a bunch of them to another spectator, and both count their cards and remember the number. The first spectator now hands his cards to the second spectator, who gives all the cards a further shuffle and hands them back to you.

You count through the cards singly for each spectator in turn, and each remembers the two-digit number on the card at the position indicated. This you point out, insures (a) a totally random selection and (b) that they will not think of the same number.

The two spectators concentrate on their numbers—you do a bit of mental arithmetic and then note down your impression on a slate.

They now *call out* the numbers they've been thinking of; these are totaled—and when your mentally discerned total is revealed, it matches exactly.

METHOD

The number cards are made up so that the two sides of any given card total the same as the two sides of each of the other cards.

OCTASM

Let us say, for example, that the total is to be 125; you would make up your cards as 75/50—60/65—43/82—etc.

This—aside from having a slate or markerboard handy for noting down your impressions—is the complete preparation.

You proceed exactly as described in effect, to the point where the second spectator hands you back the mixed packet of cards.

Telling the first spectator to remember the two-digit number which appears at his number, you tap the top card of the packet and say, "One." You then deal this card down to the table, *turning it over as you do so*. You tap the second card as you count "Two," deal it to the table on top of the first card and in the process turn it over just as you did the first. You proceed through the packet this way.

The last card, however, you place *underneath* the packet, using it as a 'scoop' to pick up the cards.

You now follow exactly the same procedure with the second spectator.

As a trial will show, this results in the two spectators thinking of the *opposite sides of the same card*. You have no idea *which* card, but since all the cards total the same it doesn't matter.

You make a show of discerning the two numbers and adding them up—act a little here, make this realistic—and note down the force total. They announce their numbers—you and the audience total them together—and you show that once again telepathy, as embodied in your very own self, triumphs....

NOTES

As indicated, you do this as mindreading, not prophecy; as telepathy it plays legitimately—as a prediction, it's a number trick.

If you are doing this as a stand-up effect rather than working at a table, you can take the cards one by one from hand to hand without changing their order, counting aloud as you do so. The last card is placed *behind* the others, and the pack is then turned around for the other selection.

I had a thought of doing this with cards bearing two or three *letters* on each side, which meant nothing to the two spectators but which combined could make only one word which matched a picture drawn by the performer; it involved the use of synonyms—e.g., *ship, boat, yacht*, etc.—but I couldn't come up with anything that didn't seem a bit precious.

It seemed to me that the methodology might somehow be applied to Stewart James' *Half And Half* effect²—but I will leave that thought, and the preceding one, to more persistent experimenters.

CREDITS

In MAGIC DUNGEON MENTALISM Howard Adams wrote up the basic principle, using dice, in his *Mad Add*³; what I've done is replace the dice force therein

²ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 184.

³Page 85.

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with the *Smith-Myth* handling of a Sidney Lawrence principle⁴, developed by Fred Smith and Hen Fetsch for use in a card coincidence effect⁵.

⁴See *It's In Your Pocket* in his TEN SELF WORKING CARD MIRACLES.

⁵FIVE O' FETSCH, page 7.

DOUBLET

This is a handling for a sealed envelope prediction which has some interesting features. While it is here applied to a simple card prediction it can be used in a variety of ways, in particular as an adjunct to the classic *Lady And Gentleman* plot.

EFFECT

You remove from your pocket a sealed envelope and put it on display—in a clip, on an easel, etc.—saying that you will attempt to influence a decision soon to be made.

Removing a pack of cards from its case, you spread them in a face-up ribbon across the table. A spectator is invited to touch any card.

When a card is indicated, you act very pleased and say that things have gone so well that you'd like to try a further test. Taking up the envelope, you write something on the face of it and put it back on display.

Now you gather the cards, spread them face down and again the spectator is invited to touch one. The card is removed from the spread and shown.

You turn around the envelope and your prediction of this card is seen to be correct. On the envelope being opened and the other prediction removed, it too is accurate.

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METHOD

The pack used is a rough-and-smooth forcing pack—so the structure of the effect is that the first choice is free and the second is a force.

What the envelope handling to be described accomplishes is to transpose the predictions, so that the obvious open and free first choice is the sealed prediction.

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This is done by fairly simple means. The envelope contains a sheet of carbon—but before inserting the sheet of carbon paper you write the name of the force card on the face of the envelope. (I suggest you use red carbon paper—and a red pencil—so the spectators will get used to seeing the red writing, which looks less like a copy than standard black carbon.)

A blank card is put in the envelope beneath the carbon paper; the 'business' side of the carbon faces *away* from the address side of the envelope, and the card is between the carbon and the flap side. A duplicate pencil is also used, and this red pencil has been coated with clear nail polish so that it does not write; this is the one the spectators see.

When you remove the envelope and put it on display, you are careful not to show the side bearing the writing.

The pack is spread face up and the spectator touches a card, the identity of which you note. Saying you will attempt a further prediction, you remove the non-writing red pencil and pick up the envelope.

On the face of the envelope, directly over the previously written prediction, you write the name of the card just noted; what happens, of course, is that a carbon impression is created on the card inside the envelope while the previously done writing—unaltered because the pencil does not write—is taken to be the prediction you are now making.

The deck is spread face down and a force card selected, and the effect concludes as described.

NOTES

A ball-point pen can be used instead of the pencil; depending on the kind of carbon you get, this can sometimes make a better impression. You might use one of the twin-barrel Chromatic™ ball-pens (available at most stationery shops) with one barrel having been written dry.

The envelope and prediction might be constructed from the A and B sheets of the white bond NCR™ papers, in which case you could let the spectator open the prediction envelope. If you do this I suggest you glue the prediction paper to a piece of card—if you don't it will not have the rigidity required for you to be able to write on it while holding it. You need this rigidity to get a good impression. Also, with the NCR, you will need a *blue* pen or pencil since that is the usual color of the impression.

There are, of course, many other approaches than that of the double prediction. If you know the spectator's name, you can write that on the envelope earlier—and, in performance, make your carbon impression in the course of apparently noting down the name.

In doing this you will have to come up with some logical presentation—it wouldn't make much sense to sign someone's name across an envelope and immediately tear it open. Also, of course, you will have to pick someone whose name is about the same length as your prediction range, or there will be a

OCTASM

noticeable disparity in the writing (e.g., the spectator's name is *Joe Fox* and the prediction is *Queen of Diamonds*).

The initials of spectators, however, used with two-digit numbers, present some interesting possibilities.

CREDITS

Jerry Sorenson's *No Swami* effect, which appeared in *The Phoenix*⁶, was an influence here, as was a book-test referencing method developed by Peter Warlock⁷. It is my understanding that Ned Rutledge's DICE TELEKINESIS (which I have never seen) employs the principle of carbon envelopes and writing one thing *through* the envelope while pretending to write another thing *on* it.

⁶No. 93; Oct. 12, 1945; page 377.

⁷One example of this can be found in his *Book Syndrome: The New Pentagram*, Vol. 18, No. 12; Feb. 1987; page 91. I've been unable at present to locate the earlier Warlock article that originally inspired me.

OPTIONAIL

Like what precedes it (and what follows!), this is not an effect as such, but rather a combining of techniques that allows for some very interesting kinds of prediction effects.

As an example, let's take the old change-in-the-pocket prediction. In this version *three* people are asked to stand and take a handful of change out of their pockets. You ask the names of the three participants, concentrate a moment and then make a prediction on a small clipboard which you hold.

The three participants count their change; the one who has the *most* money announces his total and you ask him to come up to the stage. When he arrives you hand him the prediction; it reads: '*Max [his name] will have the most money, and it will total \$1.89.*'

Before suggesting other possibilities let's get right down to the technique. For this you'll need a clipboard measuring about eight inches by ten, with a wide clip at the top; also required is a pad of spiral-bound three-by-five-inch index cards. Remove the spiral and the outer covers; all you need are the cards themselves.

Take three of them and bend them at the perforations—then carefully separate each card from the perforated strip (one at a time) for about half its length.

You now fill in the predictions, leaving the space for the name and the amount blank. This latter space should be at the right-hand edge of each card.

The three cards are overlapped so that the lower two each project out to expose the right-hand inch of their surface. The cards are then clipped to the clipboard *by their perforation strips*. The actual body of each card is not under the clip at all.

OCTASM



Your only other requirement is a nail-writer which matches the implement you used for writing the predictions.

In performance:

During the preliminary part of the effect, when the three names are given, you put one in the proper space on each card; the best way to do this is to start with the lowermost card, the two others resting on the backs of the fingers, and letting them drop as required. (The audience assumes you are writing one complete prediction rather than filling in parts of three.) The clipboard is held vertically facing you so that this action is screened from the view of the audience.

You then set the pencil aside and obtain the nail-writer (which will complete the effect) on your right thumb.

The 'winning' amount is named and you fill it in on the proper card. Due to the previous preparation of the cards you can now exert a bit of downward pressure (away from the clip) on the card; it tears free of its holding strip and moves down without any chance of the other cards coming along.

(Note: It may be thought that all this could be done in much simpler fashion by having three index cards fully exposed on the clipboard, held in place by paper clips—but a trial will prove this impractical, if only because you will be seen to be writing over too great an area.)

Other possibilities for this technique:

- Three spectators cut for high card—you've predicted which of them will win and with what card.
- You've written a two-digit number on a slate, and three spectators make guesses—you predict which of the spectators will come closest and *by how much*.
- If you happen to have three pregnant women in the audience you might even predict which one is due first and how many days before the baby is scheduled to arrive!

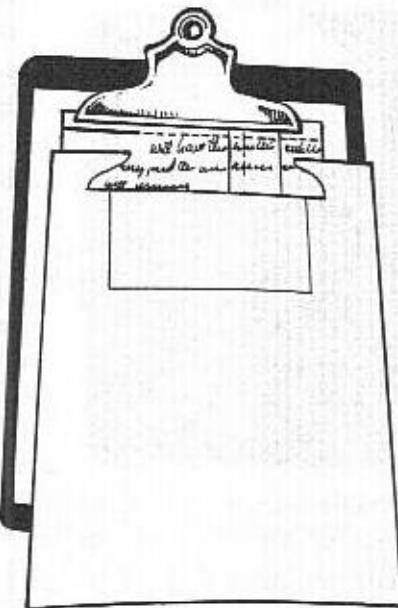
(NOTE 1993: If you want to be able to *show* the clipboard casually beforehand, try this. Underneath the cards is a plain sheet of heavy bond paper. You make a gimmick out of another sheet of bond paper by gluing a single index card near the top, and cut out a section along the top border of the paper. This cut-out fits around the edges of the clip, as shown on page 308. Thus you've made a flap which, held against the clipboard, seems to show a sheet of bond paper and an index card clipped in position. You have only to set the board down for a moment on any pretext, and then pick it up minus the flap.)

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

CREDIT

The original concept of multiple predictions on a clipboard belongs to Sam Dalal, and appeared in his *Swami* magazine⁸ as a way of avoiding having to nail-write a playing card *suit*.

What I have done here is to suggest new slants on presentation and methodology; also I've described the most trouble-free method I have come up with for handling the predictions.



⁸Vol. 3, Issue 30; June 1974; page 120; see *Magical Musings*.

INDIAIR

As with *Optional*, this is a technique for a two-phase prediction, and like that is inspired by a concept of Sam Dalal's, here combined with an angle from J.G. Thompson's Jet Thought⁹.

Here too we will not get very specific regarding what actual effects can be done; as an example, however, let us say that you are doing a version of Annemann's *Triple Coercion*¹⁰. You have forced the card, but you allow a free choice as to, say, an ESP symbol and a two-digit number. When these have been named you remove your prediction from the envelope you have been holding in full view; needless to say it is correct in all details.

For this you use five index cards; one is left uncut, but the other four have strips removed so that each is an eighth of an inch shorter than the one before. Predictions are written on each of the cards—all name the same (force) card, but each specifies a different ESP symbol; a space is left at the bottom of the card for the two-digit number.

The five cards are stacked so that the upper edges are even, the lower edges projecting so that the space for the number at the bottom of each card is exposed.

A window is cut in the face of the envelope (which is of the end-opening pay-envelope kind and just the right size to take the largest card); this window should be big enough to expose the lowermost sections of all five cards.

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⁹This was a prediction effect originally marketed through Ed Mellon; it later appeared in print in *Pallbearers Review Folio No. 6*, page 497, which dealt with Thompson's mental work.

¹⁰ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 129.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

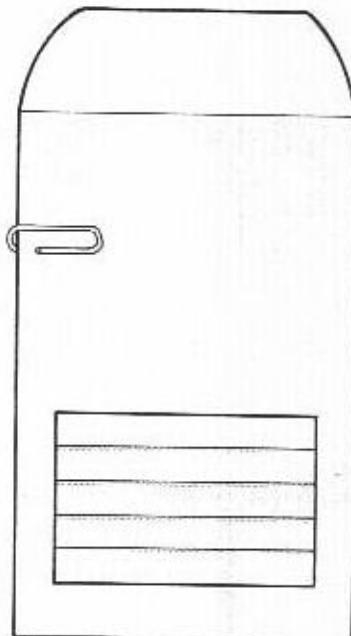
The cards are put into the envelope and a paper clip on the outside of the envelope holds them in position.

In performance, having forced the card you nail-write in the two-digit number on the exposed section of the card bearing the symbol named (the cards are of course in order and you know which is which). You flick away the paper clip—and the cards settle to the bottom of the envelope so that the uneven edges are now in the upper part. Because of this the cards now act something like an index, and you can very swiftly and cleanly reach into the envelope and extract the correct card.

Like *Optionail*, this can be used in many ways; to hark back to the theme of one of its begetters, you might predict which of five cities a person was going to visit and how many days he was going to stay—or what time his flight would arrive. You will no doubt come up with your own applications.

CREDITS

As given in text.



BLACKARD

EFFECT

You remove an uncased deck of cards from a drinking glass on your table and hand it out for shuffling as you remark that you will attempt a simple experiment in prophecy.

The shuffled deck is returned to you and you replace it in the glass. From a simple stand at the rear of the table you take a slate, and write something on the side away from the audience. The slate is replaced on its stand.

Taking the deck, you divide it in half and hold a half in each hand; you request any spectator to indicate a hand, and say that the cards in the hand not chosen will be discarded.

This procedure is repeated with several spectators until you are down to one card; this card is dropped into the glass.

Picking up the slate, you turn it around to reveal that you have written, say, *Four of Diamonds*. The glass is turned around to reveal the face of the card therein and it is, of course, the Four of Diamonds.

METHOD

Glass, deck, slate and stand are ordinary and unprepared, and may all be used for subsequent effects in your routine.

There is, however, a gimmick, which should take you all of three minutes to make...

...it is (in this case) a Four of Diamonds to the back of which you've cemented a surface of black construction paper; you then rub chalk over the paper and erase it, giving the surface the appearance of slate.

The glass is of a size that will just take a deck of cards; it should be no larger than necessary.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

The only requirement for the slate-stand is that it hold the slate upright. My own stand is a simple length of wood with a mortised slot; an alternative would be a short wooden board with a couple of household utensil clips fastened to it.

In performance, the deck of cards is removed from the glass—but the gaffed Four of Diamonds, which has been at the rear (face) of the deck, is left behind. Since the glass is sitting on the table directly in front of the slate, it now appears to be completely empty.

You proceed as described in *Effect*, and the working is now, for all practical purposes, automatic. When, after the eliminations, you are down to one card, this card is dropped into the glass in front of the gaff; when, a moment later, you turn the glass around, the Four of Diamonds is of course assumed to be the card just shown.

Cleanup is likewise simple; you gather up all the cards, remove the two from the glass as one, and place them in the case. If you require the deck later, you simply leave the gaff in the case.

NOTES

It may be pointed out that this effect could be done, indeed has been done—with a mirror glass. True, except for one thing: mirror glasses don't look empty, really; they just look *shiny*. The masking gaff here suggested, on the other hand, is extremely illusive, as a trial will show.

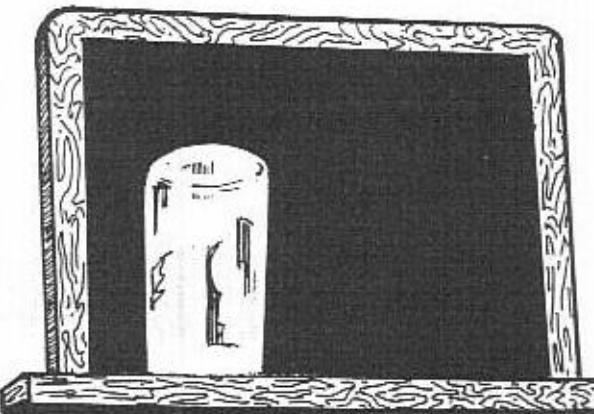
It is *not* necessary to use fluted glasses, and in fact they should not be used; you want the spectators to be able to realize that it is the correct card right away. Note that the force card should be an instantly recognizable card, such as the Two, Three or Four of Diamonds.

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Obviously there are other applications of this handling—you could, for example, switch small packets—but don't get *too* good; a randomly selected packet which turns out to be a Royal Flush in spades might be a bit more of a good thing than your audience is willing to accept.

CREDITS

Many years ago U.F. Grant put out an elaborate apparatus effect called *Jumbo Space Thot*; *Blackard* is simply an adaptation of the Grant effect for use with ordinary items, more in keeping with a mentalist's requirements.



SPYHOLE

Remember I said back in the introductory comments that a couple of the items were basically gimcracky but could be made into something, and I'd warn you when we got to them?

Well, this is the first; consider yourself warned...

EFFECT

The properties seen by the spectators at the beginning of this effect are two: the first is a letter-size envelope, addressed to you and bearing the return address of someone named *Dimitrios* in a foreign country—the second is what appears to be a deck of cards in its case.

You explain that the letter is from a friend who used to be a secret agent, and who was thought to have abilities odd even for a spy.

From the envelope you extract a card (actually this is a double-blank playing card). One side of the card bears the name and address; on the other is the legend:

ESPIONAGE
IS
MY BUSINESS

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There is, you say, something else in the envelope—but you'll get to that in a moment.

First, however, you remove the deck of cards from its case; the cards have regular backs, but the faces are unprinted and each bears a single word written in marker pen. There are no duplicates.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

You have a spectator make a genuinely free choice of any of the words from the deck as it is spread face up. A word being indicated, you retain it, putting the rest of the deck on the table and picking up the envelope.

From it you extract another card; this card has a number of holes punched in it, irregularly spaced in a line. The envelope is seen to be otherwise empty.

You now direct the spectator to place the holed card over the word ESPIONAGE. This is done and the letters thus revealed through the hole spell out the freely selected word.

METHOD

You'll need a deck of blank-faced cards, one double-blank card, a small sheet of thin plastic cut to playing card size, a paper punch, marker and a letter-size envelope.

On each of twenty-five cards write one of the following words:

PING	PONG	SONG	EON	SINE
SPONGE	SPA	SIN	PINE	SPINE
SON	SING	SINGE	PAGE	SPIN
PIG	ION	AGE	NAG	ONE
SAGE	PIE	SAG	SNAG	IN

With the paper punch, make a row of nine evenly spaced holes in the plastic card, which will serve as your template for what follows. In doing this—for reasons which will shortly become clear—confine the row to one vertical half of the card as in the illustration.

The word ESPIONAGE is typed or lettered on one side of the double-blank so that the letters will show through the nine holes of the template. (Note: if you're using a standard paper punch you will have to triple-space the typed letters to leave enough room for the holes.)

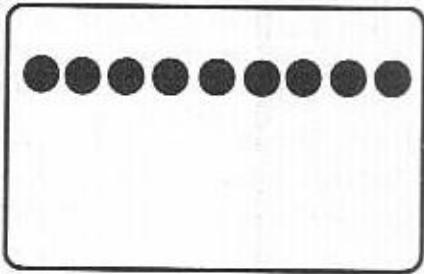
314

Using this template, you now make a 'mask' for each of the words on the list; if the word was PAGE, for example, you would punch out the third, seventh, eighth and ninth positions. Holding the template against each card as you do this insures that the alignment will be correct.

This done, each word card is paired with its mask card; the back of the word card and the blank 'face' of the mask card are roughed so the pair will move as one. The deck is assembled and one extra blank-faced card is placed on top of the pack.

If all the holes are kept to the right, the deck can be spread in left-to-right fashion and all will appear fair; no holes will show.

ESPIONAGE



OCTASM

The only preparation the envelope requires is a slit across the face; this slit is disguised by a lined-out address.¹¹

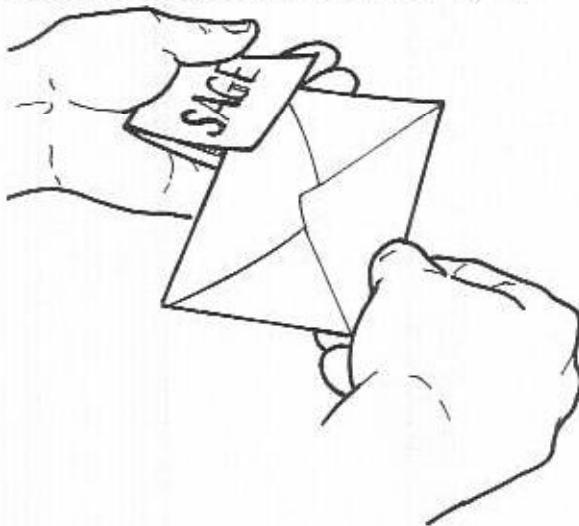
The other side of the double-blank is designed as a business card as indicated in *Effect*; this can be serious or humorous, as you desire. With this card placed in the slit envelope and the pack of cards in its case, all is ready.

In performance, you proceed as described earlier; you show the business card and place it down in front of the spectator. The envelope is set down to your right (slit side down, of course).

The deck is removed from its case and spread face down as you talk; it is then turned over and spread face up, and the spectator indicates his selection by naming any of the words.

The named card is cut to the face of the deck and taken off in the left hand; actually, of course, you are holding a roughed pair, displayed face up.

The pack is placed on the table and the right hand picks up the envelope by its right edge. As this is done your left hand very slightly buckles the lower of the two cards it holds, so that they separate a bit at the right rear edge.



Apparently what happens is that you place the word card on top of the envelope; this does happen, but the envelope goes between the two cards so that the mask card is now *under* the envelope. In doing this you turn slightly to the right so the separation of the two cards is concealed from a front view. The right hand lifts the flap of the envelope; you extract the mask card through the slit and drop it on the table in front of the spectator.

You drop the word card on the table and peer into the envelope, spreading it with both hands, fingers inside; your fingers conceal the slit and the envelope is seen to be empty. The action here should be that *you* are making sure for yourself that there is nothing else in the envelope, not that you are necessarily proving it to the spectators. Alternatively you can simply tear up the envelope; I don't think this is necessary.

The spectator places the mask card against the business card—and the word is revealed.

¹¹An idea of Peter Warlock's; see *Think As I Think*, marketed in the Modes For Mentalists series, then later published under the title *Thoughts Are Yours* in *The New Pentagram*, Vol. 17, No. 11; Jan. 1986; page 86.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

NOTE

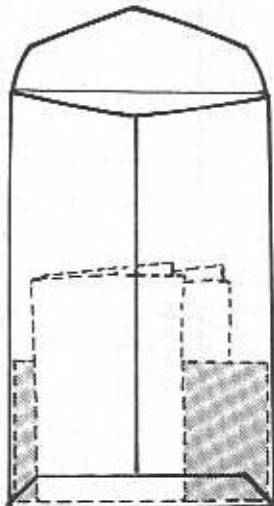
The presentation will obviously be geared to the idea of codes and ciphers, and could form part of a routine about telepathic spies. Clearly, however, this is intended as a starting point—perhaps you will be the one to turn it into a miracle.

CREDITS

As indicated in text. There have been other 'mask' revelations in print, but they were usually designed as ways of achieving multiple outs. The nice point about *Spyhole* is that the spectator can play around with the two cards as long as he likes without being able to produce any other word than that freely chosen by him.

INDIVISION

This is not a trick or even a method, but simply a way of handling a particular kind of two-option envelope; there are many situations where it can be useful.



A pay envelope is used, and a cut-down playing card (or other card of similar consistency) is inserted into it so that it just fits cross-wise within; this divider card is pushed down to the bottom of the envelope.

If a folded piece of paper, or a business card, is now inserted on each side of the partition, and the envelope is buckled, one of the items can be shaken out quite forcefully while the other remains trapped between the partition wall and the side of the envelope.

The only problem, of course, is in getting it to buckle the way you want it to each time.

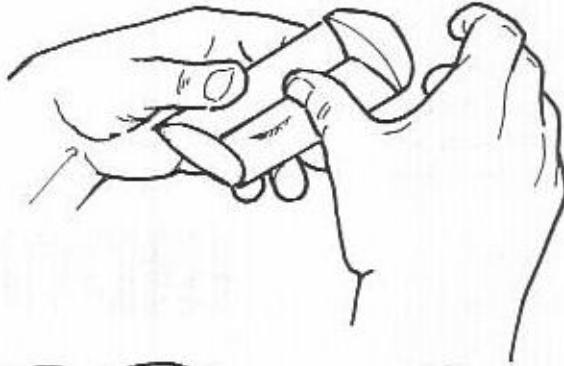
The procedure for accomplishing this is as follows: the envelope is held (for example) in the left hand, seam side up, fingers along one long edge and thumb in the middle of the other—in about the position you'd hold a deck of cards to do the Charlier one-handed pass. The flap of the envelope points toward the right.

For the *uppermost* (closest to the seam) of the two items:

The right hand approaches and the right thumb presses down on the center of the envelope from above as the left thumb and fingers squeeze slightly; the result is that the envelope is buckled downward.

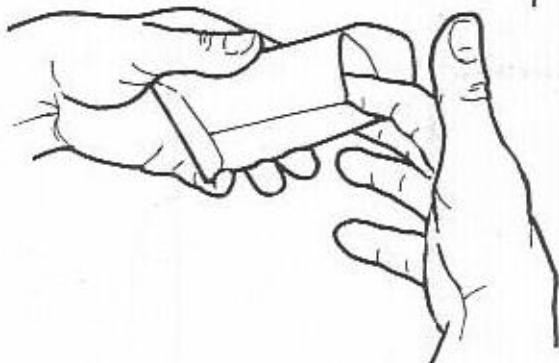
MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

The right hand moves back slightly and the first finger pokes a short way into the envelope and lifts; the result now is that the seam side buckles upward and the lower item is trapped against the partition. The envelope is shaken and the upper item drops out into the right hand.

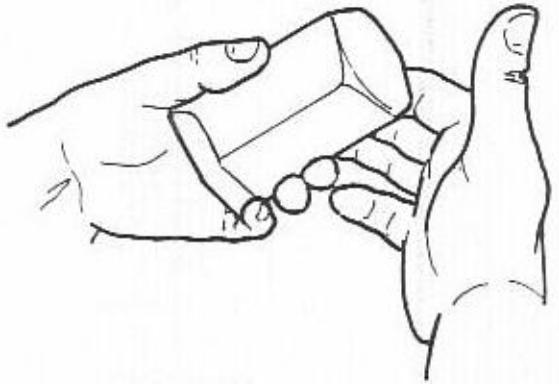


For the *lowermost* of the two items:

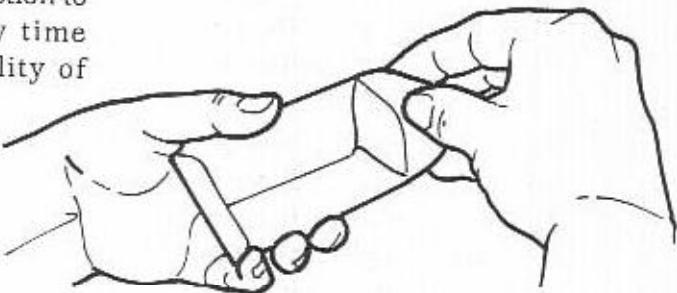
The right hand approaches as before, but this time the fingers move below and the envelope is buckled upward; again the right hand moves back slightly, and now the thumb moves onto the upper surface of the flap and presses down (in this case it is not necessary for the thumb to enter the envelope).



The result is that the lower billet can be shaken out in casual fashion while the upper billet remains trapped.



I realize that for many of you the preceding paragraphs may describe what seems a very elementary procedure, as indeed it is—but it is a handling that allows the action to be performed every time without the possibility of fumbling.



OUTLANDER

In Gene Grant's PHANTINI'S MENTAL KEY¹² there is an ingenious living-and-dead test in which five spectators write the names of living friends at any of six positions on a sheet of paper; one of the five spectators is now chosen and he or she adds, at the remaining position on the list, the name of someone known to him who has passed on. In due course you divine the name.

Grant's secret was simple and practical; you look for the two names written in the same handwriting and pump for the right one.

An excellent method, you'll agree. What I offer here is a procedure to eliminate the pump, which also in some cases will provide an additional effect.

It goes like this:

When you get back the sheet of paper you identify the two names in the same handwriting; one of these you circle with the pencil. You memorize it and the other possibility, remembering which one of the two you've circled.

Fold the paper and hand it to the spectator who wrote both names and ask him *which name he wrote first*. He announces it.

If it is the circled name have him open the paper and read off the name marked with a circle; seemingly you have divined his thought.

Now you say, "... but that's not the name of the person who has passed on, of course. That person is..."—and here you announce the other name.

If, on the other hand, the name he calls out is *not* the circled name, then you have in fact circled the dead name. In this case you ask each of the others to announce the names they wrote;

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

then you return to the man holding the paper and ask him the name of the dead person. He announces it—and then is told to open the paper and read the circled name.

CREDITS

As indicated, the primary credit is to Gene Grant; as to who invented the dead name test, it might've been Henry Slade—or Daniel Dunglas Home—or Alexander the Paphlagonian ...

CHOPTION

In recent years there have been a number of word-card effects dependent on peculiarities of the particular words. *Spyhole* was one such; this is another; and further on you'll find what I consider my ultimate effort along this line. That one, however, will involve telepathy and clairvoyance—here we have a very straightforward-appearing prediction.

EFFECT

You show a white card about six inches by ten in size, and state you've made a prediction of something that will happen shortly. Setting it on display in a clip or on an easel, you pick up a deck of word cards and exhibit them freely. The cards are ordinary and there are no duplicates—and from them a spectator makes a selection in what seems to be a very fair manner.

Nevertheless, when you show your prediction it is, of course, correct.

METHOD

The basic secret is that the spectator does have a choice—but it is not quite as free as he thinks it is; and the prediction is such that it can show any one of a number of outcomes.

The 'white card' is in fact a card to which you have applied a Velleda™ writing surface. This can be purchased in a roll from any artists' supply house, and is so prepared that when a Velleda or similar erasable marker is used on it, the surface can be wiped clean with a touch. On this card you have written the following, spacing the letters so they go evenly from one side of the card to the other:

S T A B L E T

The deck of word cards—there should be about three or four dozen words—is ordinary, and the words can be whatever you like, as long as they include these seven:

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

STAB STABLE TABLET TABLET ABLE TAB LET

These seven cards are on top of the deck.

In performance, the deck is picked up and faces are shown to the audience, though you do not overly display the rearmost group of seven. You then do any sort of casual mix which leaves the cards undisturbed on top. You ask a spectator to deal the deck into seven face-down piles (lucky number, days of the week, etc.); when this has been done it will put one of the seven cards at the face of each packet. Any one of the packets is chosen and turned face up.

Let us say the word thus revealed is ABLE. Picking up the slate you talk for a moment about the freedom of choice, and as you do your left and right thumbs obliterate the ST and T at each side of the row of letters, leaving ABLE for you to show.

As you will note, any one of the seven words can be shown by the erasing of unnecessary letters from the ends.

NOTES

The force procedure given is one of the simplest, and there are many others which can be used. For the one just described, Phil Goldstein suggests that you give the spectator his option of dealing any number of piles up to seven, giving him one more choice to make in the selection procedure.

Another approach would be to cut a number of packets from the deck, the force cards comprising one of the packets; you force this packet by equivoque, deal out the cards and then have the final selection made by following *exactly* the same pattern as in the equivoque, thus legitimizing that earlier procedure.

Still another procedure would be to arrange the cards alternately with indifferent cards and use a deal-and-stop method of handling.

Given the number of options, you should have no difficulty in coming up with a ranging-force procedure which best fits your style of working.

I describe the prediction as being made on a Velleda surface, but it can of course be done with a slate of the proper size. Should you choose this, first scribble over the slate and wipe it clean—but do not wash it—so the chalk smudges from the erased letters will not be noticeable.

322

CREDITS

The thumb-erasing of parts of a prediction is Bill Simon's, and appears in his excellent handling of a cyclic number prediction in his MATHEMATICAL MAGIC¹³.

The Velleda principle has been used within mentalism for some time now—John Pomeroy was probably the first to market an effect dependant on the Velleda principle¹⁴. The late Bob Fillman was an early experimenter along

¹³See *The Cycloid*, page 31.

¹⁴Expo-Mental released in 1978.

OCTASM

these lines—and the principle is now available in a few marketed effects. In many ways it is an outgrowth (in our profession) of Fleming and Fricke's It's A Pip pip paint methodology popular in the 1950's.

WHEELIE

My alternative title for this was *Two Ballsy*, referring to requirements on a couple of levels. It is not a trick in itself but a particular force; in addition to a bit of chicanery it requires a performer who can keep command of a situation.

EFFECT

You exhibit a small roulette wheel of the kind sold in game stores; you also show the small roulette ball.

You have any spectator give the wheel a whirl, and in the approved croupier fashion you send the ball spinning around the inside rim of the wheel. It is heard to rattle down into one of the cups, and when the wheel has stopped spinning the spectator is asked to call out the number thus arrived at...

...all seems fair, but the number has in fact been forced.

METHOD

Actually *three* balls are employed...

...but let's first consider the wheel you're going use, specifically looking at the cups into one of which the ball will eventually fall. In the wheels commonly marketed, these are of two types—one has a *silver* finish, one a *dull black* finish.

We will assume for purposes of description that we have a wheel with the silver cup; this being the case, we will need *two* black balls and *one* white ball.

One of the black balls is glued into the force cup.

In performance, you display the other black ball at your fingertips, fingerpalming the white ball in the same hand.

First you exhibit the wheel—not, at this point, letting anyone look *into* it, of course—and then the ball in the other hand. You move to a spectator, holding the wheel so the rim is at her eye level or a shade higher, and have her spin the wheel by the

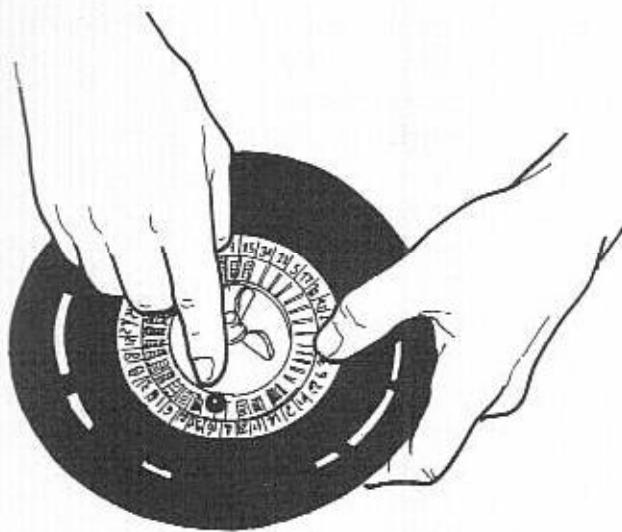
OCTASM

projecting center knob. As audience attention is on the wheel, you have no trouble in switching the positions of the black and white ball in your other hand.

(NOTE 1993: If the glued-in ball is on the side nearest the spectators, you can casually tilt the wheel forward so they can see into it; they only see the rear half, and the presence of the ball is concealed by the rim of the wheel.)

It is the white ball you place into the inner rim of the wheel, and it is this ball which the spectators hear bouncing around and finally settling into a cup.

As you move toward a spectator you look into the wheel and determine the locations of the two balls. While the black ball will attract the eye and the white ball will tend to blend in, this is not sufficient cover. What you do is this:



Your free hand points to the black ball as you ask the spectator, "*What's that number?*"; in so doing your hand rests *directly above the white ball*, concealing it from view. As soon as the spectator calls off the number you move the wheel up and away, setting it aside.

The one problem that can possibly arise is if the white ball ends up in the cup directly adjacent to the force cup.

In actuality it is almost impossible for this to happen, since the glued-in black ball seems to act much as the fixed 'bumpers' in the wheel and will usually knock the white ball some distance away. If, however, the gods have something against you and the balls end up side by side, point to the black (force) ball with your forefinger and steal the white ball out with thumb and second finger; the grip is somewhat like that used in the *Shell Game* move.

The important point in using this force comes when you ask the spectator, "*What's that number?*" Not "*Would you tell everyone what cup the ball landed in?*" or "*Please tell us the number of the cup*"—use a simple direct question that requires no thought or hesitation on the spectator's part. This is essential, since what you don't want here is any kind of stall while your hand is hiding the white ball. For a second or two your action is natural and acceptable—but if you have to wait five or ten seconds for the spectator to hear, understand your request and act on it you are going to have people wondering why you don't move your hand away.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

NOTE

If you use Tony Shiels' *Psychic Chance* routine¹⁵, you can combine this force with a forcing deck and a poker-chip equivoque and do the routine without a one-ahead; this might be useful as an alternate on repeat shows.

¹⁵*Invocation*, No. 5; page 66.

FLIPOUT

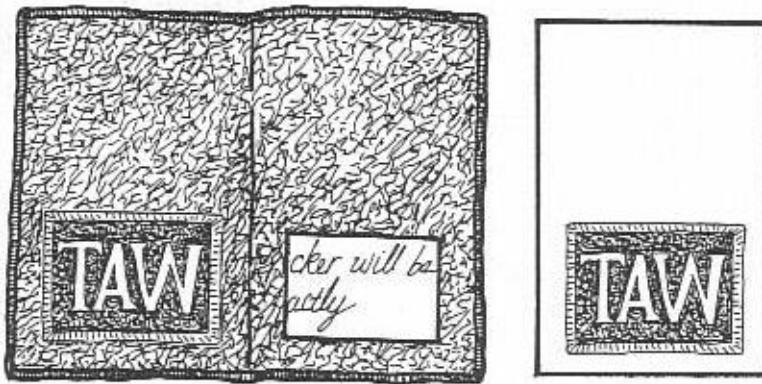
Here is another utility item, combining two well-known principles to bring about some interesting possibilities.

You'll need a standard Humber Wallet; this should be the kind *without* the top flap and buckle—the wallet must look the same on both sides.

You also require some gold embossing paper (available at stationery stores), some three-by-five-inch index cards, rubber cement and a very sharp cutting tool such as an X-acto™ knife.

On the lower third of the outside of the wallet you draw a two-inch square with the gold foil; in the center of the square (to give some logic for its presence) you put your initials in gold. You duplicate this on the other outside face of the wallet.

Put several index cards into one of the half-pockets and close the wallet. With the X-acto knife, *carefully* cut out one of the squares, just inside the gold line. This should be done neatly enough that the gold line itself will conceal the cut.



After removing any lining from the cut piece, coat the under-surface of this piece with rubber cement. Put a fresh index card in the wallet and coat the area exposed through the window

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with rubber cement. Allow the cement to dry and then replace the square of leather in the window, where it will of course adhere to the index card. You may wish now to trim the upper and outer edges of the index card to a small square.

If all this has been neatly done you now have a wallet which appears the same on both sides and perfectly ordinary, but which can be used in some interesting ways.

Obviously, of course, you can have someone write something on a card, after which you put it in the wallet making sure it goes beneath the index card gaff; it can then be read through the window. In inserting the spectator's card, push down slightly (or, alternatively, lift the index cards in the pocket slightly), so that there is no chance of the card hanging up on the lip of the leather square during the insertion process.

However, there are some more interesting things that can be done. Let us say you wish to do a nail-writer prediction of a number.

In the window-pocket you place a pay envelope which contains your prediction ready to be filled in; this envelope also has a window cut out to coincide with the one in the wallet.

In the other pocket you have an unprepared envelope—the flap of which, like that of the gaffed envelope, has been sealed down.

You remove the wallet from your pocket and open it so the ungaffed envelope is on view; momentarily you remove the envelope, showing it freely on both sides without making a point of it, and then replace it in the pocket where it is still on view.

You now are holding the wallet by the half which has the window, while the other half swings freely. The holding hand has a nail-writer on its thumb.

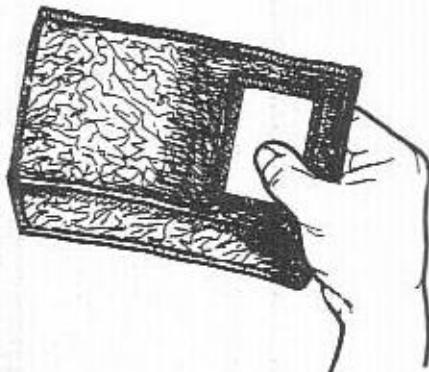
A spectator calls out a number, and you ask him or her to come up to the stage. As the spectator does so, your thumb fills in the number on the prediction card.

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Note that, even if there are a few spectators who know of nail-writers, or think you could somehow tamper with the prediction, it is on view well away from your fingers and hand and seemingly inaccessible.

As the spectator comes up on stage you allow the wallet to swing closed. After a brief introduction you open the wallet from the other side and extract the window envelope; the wallet is put back in your pocket and the prediction taken from the envelope for the spectator to read.

An interesting topological point is that—even though here you don't need to use the camouflaging leather insert—it will seem to the spectators that they



OCTASM

have seen both sides of the wallet. This happens because in the early part of the routine the side bearing the envelope is seen to have a back and later, when you open the wallet, the side *not* (visibly) bearing an envelope is seen to have a back.

Since this is a book on mentalism, I will only suggest the possibilities for a *repeat-initialed-card-to-wallet* routine, and let you work out the details if you do that sort of thing.

This is, as noted earlier, a utility device, and it would be impossible—and inadvisable—for me to attempt to list all the things you can do with it. Suffice it to say that you can do anything needing either a Humber Wallet or a window wallet—with a convincing handling not possible to achieve with either of those gaffs alone.

NOTE

If you are uncertain of your ability to do the gold-embossing neatly, take the wallet to a luggage shop and have them do it.

A black wallet with a rough outer surface is preferable to those of lighter shades or smoother leather.

SELECTRICK

EFFECT

You stand near a desk-model IBM Selectric™ typewriter; after suitable patter-presentation, perhaps regarding a spirit typist, you ask questions of the typewriter and it replies by ringing its bell...

...from here on in you can do any kind of spirit-bell routine you like. There are three interesting points:

1. A body ringer is not used; the actual bell on the typewriter does the ringing.
2. At some point during the presentation you can unplug the machine—but the bell will continue to ring on command.
3. At the conclusion of the routine the typewriter may be thoroughly examined; there is nothing to find.

METHOD

I work this with an IBM Selectric Model No. 71; I've no doubt that the method can be adapted to other models.

If you lift the hinged cover of this model of typewriter you will see a small lever on the *left* side of the *right margin setting* device. Pushing the lever to the right makes the bell ring. Obviously, you need only hook a doubled length of thread over the lever and feed it out through one of the holes in the bottom of the case.

From three or four feet away you pull the thread—using the hand on the side away from the spectators—to make the bell ring. At the finish you release *one* end of the thread, and as you walk away it is pulled free.

OCTASM

NOTE

Examination of other typewriters should indicate how the thread should be set up in each case. Clearly the most effective way to use this is when you can prepare a typewriter in someone else's office or home.

REVELLEDA

I dislike ad-type puffery, so I won't say the following item is worth the price of the book. However, I will point out that it duplicates by completely different means a primary effect of a prop selling for several hundred dollars.

EFFECT

While you are blindfolded, or your back is turned, a spectator writes something on a large white markerboard and shows it to the audience; he then erases the writing completely.

Nevertheless, you are able to reveal his thought with complete accuracy.

METHOD

This depends on a very specific peculiarity of the properties used.

I discovered that if you write with a Velleda™ pen—not on erasable markerboard—but on what is called *high-impact white styrene*, you will be able to erase that writing as with a markerboard...

...the writing will, however, leave a trace which is only visible if you are looking for it, and if you view the surface from the proper angle.

The most vigorous erasing by the spectator will not harm this trace; it is there permanently—so permanently, in fact, that after a few uses you'll have to replace the styrene. As it happens, this stuff is extremely cheap—about thirty-five cents a square foot, on the average (1982 price)—so that's no problem.

You might consider a handling using a smaller piece than the two-by-three-foot board on an easel. For example, let's take a piece about a foot square: we put a bulldog clip at the top, and we fasten the Velleda pen to it with a length of cord.

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Now—by drawing a line on the board and telling the spectator to write his word or number on that—we can use this one piece about eight times without fear of overlapping impressions. (The two sides can each have the clip on any one of the four edges.)

If you use this latter version, try this:

Prepare a large talisman on parchment and have it handy; when the spectator hands you the board you clip the talisman to the side she did *not* use (a mark on one side of the bulldog clip will facilitate this).

You hold up the board facing her and have her stare at the talisman. While she's doing that, you have the side bearing the trace facing you, and can discern it at your leisure.

NOTES

I specify a Velleda pen because—at least as far as I have been able to discover—other brands of erasable marker will not work, in the sense that the original writing won't erase from the board. You may wish to experiment with other kinds of markers.

As many of you will know, the high-impact white styrene here specified is that used in Henry Fields' Fields Device clipboard which will retain an impression when NCR™ paper is used on it. There's no reason that your board can't be used for both purposes in the same show.

I should point out re the 'easel' version that if you get the lighting angle just right in positioning the board, you can read the impression from some distance away. For this, of course, the larger the spectator's writing, and the simpler, the better.

In using this you could employ the glimpse suggested in Annemann's *Mystery Of The Blackboard*¹⁶; since the board has been erased, the blindfold there mentioned is not necessary.

(NOTE 1993: The 'prop' mentioned in the introduction to this effect was the John Cornelius Brainpower Board, no longer available. Cornelius' ingenious device could accomplish a number of other effects not possible with my method.)

CREDITS

The Fields Device, marketed by Henry Fields, was also described by Mr. Fields in the pages of *Magick*¹⁷.

The operating principle of *Revelleda* is, as indicated, my own discovery. An ancestor, however, might be the Dr. Q slate test in his SIMPLICITY MINDREADING ACT, which used an oil-soaked piece of chalk to leave a trace on a school slate.

¹⁶ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 228.

¹⁷No. 240; Sept. 14, 1979; page 1197.

THINKY

— And here is the *other* gimcracky routine...

EFFECT

You talk of Lucrezia Borgia (1480-1519) and her penchant for experiments in terminal pharmacology. You point out that she seemed to have a 'sixth sense' where poisons were concerned, so that she was never in danger from her own concoctions.

Indicating a young lady, you say that you have a sense that she might be able to carry on in the Borgia tradition; she joins you to assist in the experiment.

You have seven glass vials; these are about a half-inch in diameter and three inches long. A supply of corks is also available.

Into one of the vials you pour black ink, saying that it will represent poison; the others are filled with water, and all are corked. Each is then sealed in an opaque paper envelope and the envelopes are thoroughly mixed.

Now you ask the young lady to assume the role of Lucrezia; she is to pick up the envelopes one by one and continue until she feels a sense of danger, an intuition that she is holding the poison vial.

Finally she decides on one envelope and you tell her to open it. She does; it is, of course, the ink-filled vial...

METHOD

...not surprising, since now *all* the vials contain ink; you filled them not with water but with the well-known Think Ink chemicals invented by Orville Meyer. You have adjusted the formula so that the change will occur well after the vials have been sealed in the envelopes. That's really all there is to it.

OCTASM

I do not give the formula since (a) it is in print many places, including Meyer's excellent *MAGIC IN THE MODERN MANNER*¹⁸, and (b) if you decide to use this it'll be simpler to buy the commercially-available preparations from a magic shop than to locate a chemical-supply house. These sources will indicate how to arrange things so that the chemicals combine in the act of pouring the liquid into the vials.

(One simple way is to have the first solution in a cut-glass tumbler; at the top of the tumbler you use cellophane tape to fasten a clear plastic vial, and in this vial you put the second solution. The two solutions mix as they are poured out.

NOTES

I called this 'gimcracky' because in the context of a formal show I can't see carrying around the liquids, vials, etc.—and then going through the necessarily involved procedure of filling and corking the vials, sealing them in envelopes, and so on, just so a spectator can find one of seven items. It won't be worth the time invested.

There are, however, situations such as more intimate entertainments where, built up with a good story along the lines suggested, this could be very effective indeed.

CREDITS

As indicated in text.

¹⁸Page 67.

ANAGRAMARYE

There have been many effects in mentalism using the principle of the anagram. Such creators as Stanley Collins, Edward Bagshaw, Stewart James, Trevor Hall, Peter Warlock, Bertram Adams, Sam Dalal, the Rev. G.A. Arrowsmith, Sam Schwartz, Phil Goldstein and Howard Adams are among those who have contributed new angles and approaches.

In what follows I have tried to strengthen the effect in several ways: by combining with the telepathic effect one of clairvoyance; by more than doubling the number of words used; and by so arranging the presentation that the final divination of the word is an added punch rather than an anticlimax.

EFFECT

You show a large chart on which are more than six dozen words; this is handed to a spectator to look over. While he does this another spectator is asked to shuffle a pack of alphabet or Lexicon™ cards. Retrieving the cards, you drop them in your side jacket pocket without so much as glancing at them.

The spectator with the chart is asked to think of any word that he likes; this done, the chart is put away. You now request that the spectator visualize his word as being written on a large blackboard. He is to let his mental gaze travel back and forth across the visualized word.

You reach into your side coat pocket and after a moment extract a card, asking the spectator if the letter it bears appears in the thought-of word; he agrees that it does.

In like manner you bring out several more cards until the spectator indicates that all the letters of the word are there. *At no time do you see the faces of the letter cards.*

Holding the packet of cards between your palms, you now proceed to divine the word.

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METHOD

What's involved here, in addition to the anagram principle, is a particular handling of extra letter cards and a card index.

The words listed on the chart below are lettered onto a large card—not in neat columns or rows, but all over the card and in completely random order.

<u>S PACKET</u>			<u>E PACKET</u>		
No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3
S			E		
T	pins	P, I, N	R	bet	B, T
	spine	E		beat	A
	sniper	R	Packet 1	bleat	L
	pincers	C		battle	T
	conspire	O		tea-table	A, E
	precision	I	A	era	
E	set			red	D
	crust	C, R, U		dire	I
	rustic	I	Packet 2	dirge	G
	curiosity	O		girdle	L
	citrous	O		griddle	D
R	rest		N	near	
	toes	O		read	D
	stone	N		heard	H
	sonnet	N	Packet 3	thread	T
	tension	I		L	
	mentions	M		learn	
	moistening	I, G		crane	C
N	stern			cancer	C
	tears	A		chancrē	H
	crates	C	T	antler	
	scatter	T	Packet 4	angler	G
	citrates	I		general	E
	strategic	G		enlarger	R
	cigarettes	E	I	reliant	
I	insert			turn-lane	U, N
	astern	A	Packet 5	Packet 15	
	strange	G		triangle	
	sergeant	E		unreality	U, Y
P	stripen		G	Packet 16	
	stinger	G			
	steering	E	Packet 6		
	reseating	A			
	tangerines	N			
O	pointers				
	sprinted	D			
	president	E	Packet 7		
	pedestrian	A			
M	inspector	C			
	introspect	T	Packet 8		
	protections	O			
	stereopticon	E			
D	prisonment	N	Packet 9		
	omnipresent	E			
A, E	impersonated				

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In your pocket you have a card index which must have *sixteen* pockets—easily made by taping three additional pockets to a Q.5 Index¹⁹. In each of these pockets is a group of cards as indicated in Column No. 3 of the chart.

For example: the first pocket contains in order the letters P-I-N-E-R-C-O-I; the sixth has the letters G-E-A-N; the ninth, N-E; the fourteenth, G-E-R.

In addition to the cards in the index there is one more packet; it contains, in order from top to face, the letters:

S-T-E-R-N-I-P-O-M-D-A-E-G-I-T-L-N-A-R-E

This packet lies in the pocket in front of the index.

With another deck of letter cards in its case and the word chart at hand, you are ready for performance.

As indicated in *Effect*, you have a word thought of and then place the chart aside; by this time you have had the Lexicon deck shuffled and have put it into your pocket to the *rear* of the index.

Asking the spectator to concentrate, you withdraw the S from the top of the packet which rests in front of the index. If the spectator indicates the letter is correct you continue taking cards from the top.

One of two things will now happen: either the spectator at some point will tell you that you hold all the letters in his thought-of word—in which case you know that the spectator has thought of one of the underlined words on the chart above (not, of course, underlined on the one you show the spectator)—or the spectator will say that you have made a mistake, that the letter you have brought out does not appear in the word. The latter situation will tend to occur five times as often as the former.

When this happens, you go to the index and begin taking out cards from the pocket *equaling the number of cards correctly taken from the packet*. That sounds more complicated than it is so let's do an example; let's say the spectator is thinking of the word SCATTER.

(The underlined words are those *completed* when the letter to their immediate left is called.)

You remove the S, T, E and R from the large packet, but when you remove the N the spectator says you have made a mistake. You discard the N; you now have four cards, so you go to the index and locate the fourth packet (A-C-T-I-G-E) and begin removing cards in order. The A, C and T are taken from the pocket and added to those in the hand, and at this point the spectator indicates that all the cards are there.

You now proceed to divine the word, of which more in a moment.

First, however, I must discuss what happens when the spectator says your first card—the S—is incorrect:

¹⁹See Corinda's THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, page 90.

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In this case you discard it, and take out the E from the *face* of the packet—and you continue removing cards from the face. In the situations where you must go to the index, you must recall that the E cards occupy the tenth through sixteenth pockets in your index—so you must simply add nine to the number of cards in your hand to indicate which pocket will be the right one.

As to the divination of the word—if you know what letters you're holding (not a difficult task to remember, as you know the order of the cards in the large packet) and are reasonably familiar with the words on the chart, you should be able to figure out what the word is. It should be pointed out that—since the spectators never see the *backs* of the letter cards (as you never see the faces)—you can mark the cards rather boldly, even to the point of having the word each completes written right there.

Alternatively you can have a copy of the chart in view on your table or stuck to a case or piece of apparatus. Memorization is preferable.

NOTES

Instead of the large word chart you can use a deck of word cards; my feeling is that in this particular effect the large chart is more impressive.

You can put one additional word into the list, and have its own separate packet at one end of the index; the only requirement is that it not have an S or E in it.

A bit of business which can be used in conjunction with this is to have a letter X card handy in your pocket; it can be at the rear of the index, and when you put the deck in you make sure the X goes where you can find it. In performance, you take the S and the E out and are told they don't appear in the word; saying you will try once more, you take out the X—and on the laugh take a look at the cards yourself. You now tell the spectator to keep his mind on the effect—and can proceed to divine the 'special' word, while the two earlier misses will be considered as an intentional gag.

When you go to the index and locate the correct packet, you kick it sidewise so that it projects a bit from the side of the index; this way you don't have to find it again each time. While this will facilitate removal of the cards, do not bring them out *too* quickly—given what you are supposed to be doing.

Do bear in mind that while this may read as being a bit complex, it is actually fairly simple in performance—also, from the spectators' point of view it plays very directly and logically.

When I showed this routine to Phil Goldstein he was inspired to produce the following text, printed here with his permission:

PRESIDENT CARNEC HAD TO LEARN TO BE RELIANT ON THE STRATEGIC POINTERS OF TWO MEN: GENERAL CRUST AND SERGEANT ANGLER. WHEN THERE IS A DEARTH OF PROTECTIONS, YOU CAN BET THERE IS A STRANGE UNREALITY.

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THE TWO MEN RIDE IN THE CAR IN FRONT OF THE PRESIDENT; THE SERGEANT SITS IN FRONT, THE GENERAL ASTERN. AS THEY NEAR A PEDESTRIAN, THE SERGEANT CAN SEE HE IS A SNIPER! ANGLER IS ON HIS TOES; HE IS NOT A CHANCER. STEERING TO THE TURN-LANE, HE MENTIONS THE SNIPER TO THE GENERAL. WITH CURIOSITY, THE TWO CRANE TO SEE THIS MAN, WHO IS IN FRONT OF TWO RED CRATES OF TANGERINES.

THE TWO MEN CONSPIRE TO BEAT THE SNIPER. AS CRUST IS RESEATING TO THE FRONT OF THE CAR, ANGLER HAS SPRINTED TO A STONE RIDGE NEAR THE CRATES. THE MEN ARE NOW IN A TRIANGLE.

AS A STRIPEN BEE CAN INSERT ITS STINGER, SO THE SERGEANT HAS PINCERS OF TENSION OMNIPRESENT IN HIS SPINE. THE TWO MEN GIRDLE FOR BATTLE—BUT THE SNIPER HAS GIRDLED, TOO. CAN THE GENERAL DARE USE HIS GUN? YES! THE CITROUS IN THE CRATES SCATTERS, MOISTENING THE STONE RIDGE. THE SNIPER IS SET TO RUN—BUT THE STERN SERGEANT IS NEAR, AND PINS THE SNIPER TO THE STONE.

THE SNIPER IS HEARD TO BLEAT.

NOW THE MEN SIT AT THE TEA-TABLE IN THE CHANCERY. INSPECTOR SOURCIT HAS THE GUN OF THE SNIPER IN THE STEREOPTICON ENLARGER, TO LEARN THE PRECISION OF THE GUN. IN FRONT OF THE INSPECTOR ARE HIS CIGARETTES.

IN A DAY, HE HAS LEARNT THAT PRECISION. NOW THE SNIPER IS SET FOR PRISONMENT.

YOU MAY INTROSPECT AS YOU READ THIS: THE SNIPER HAS IMPERSONATED A PEDESTRIAN, BUT THE CURIOSITY OF THE GENERAL AND THE SERGEANT BEAT HIM. A SONNET, THEN, TO THE TWO MEN WHO RIDE IN FRONT OF THE PRESIDENT. IT IS A NEW ERA.

Whew...

...a careful reading of the, ah, prose will reveal that Phil has made a few changes in the word list as here used.

DIRGE, for example, becomes RIDGE; GRIDDLE is now GIRDLED; ANTLER is LEARNT. For his 'odd word' which uses neither S nor E, Phil has chosen FRONT. You will find a few other changes: a Y is added to CHANCER and it mutates to CHANCERY, for example.

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It would, of course, be possible to have this page of text set up in type to match that of a standard paperback book page. The page, inserted in a book, would be riffle-forced and the spectator invited to think of any word '*of five letters or more, just to make it interesting*'—and you then proceed with the divination.

CREDITS

The word list here uses as a starting point those of Sam Schwartz' Word-A-Matic²⁰ and Trevor Hall's *Nothing Is Impossible* in the book of the same title²¹.

²⁰An earlier version of this Schwartz effect appeared in *Linking Ring* under the title *Anagrammatic*: Vol. 43, No. 1; Jan. 1963; page 83.

²¹Page 56.

OCTASM

In Mr. Schwartz' routine there were twenty-nine words given; in Mr. Hall's there were six—I have expanded and revised the lists as indicated.

Mr. Schwartz is also, to the best of my knowledge, the creator of the 'mistake' procedure for branching out, which greatly expands the possibilities of such effects.

There have been various uses of word cards, letter cards and indexes in word divinations, but none is a direct antecedent of that given here. The foregoing combination and routine is, to the best of my knowledge, original with me.

KEYKNOW

In late 1976 I devised the routine and presentation which follows; in accordance with a suggestion by Ricky Jay, I sent it along to Ken Brooke—who at that time was marketing Don Alan's Ringed, a version of the Al Koran keycase for the Flying Ring effect.

Due to various circumstances the routine was not then published. Mr. Brooke then retired—and because my friend Don Wayne acquired in 1980 the rights to a similar presentation which he now is marketing as Room Service, I have decided to publish the routine here.

To eliminate confusion with his marketed effect, in 1980 Don Wayne purchased from me all commercial marketing rights to my presentation. Therefore, he retains those rights to this effect in addition to those of his own marketed version.

It should be noted that the following routine and Don Wayne's effect, Room Service, are completely different in their methodology.

This presentation uses the keycase apparatus supplied for Ringed and, like that effect, has as its inspiration a routine of the late Al Koran.

I will presume for the sake of instruction that you have the Ringed keycase—which is of the squeeze-purse kind—and that you have studied its instructions and know how to handle it.

The effect will be described in the course of the presentation.

PREPARATION

You will need three keys; two of these have nothing to do with the effect and the only requirement for them is that they are quite obviously *not door keys*. In my case the keys are a

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mailbox key and a car key, the latter having the make of car engraved on it. These keys are placed on the two outer chains.

The center key is an ordinary brass door key of the kind that operates pin-tumbler locks. Take it to an engraver and have it engraved on one side of the keyhead with the name of an apartment complex and below that the name of the town where you live. For example:

BAY VILLA
MALIBU, CA.

The other side of the key—which should be a smooth surface without bumps or indentations—is prepared either with a small white self-stick label or a piece of white adhesive bandage tape. I prefer the latter as it is a bit more secure and also seems more natural—you often find keys labeled in this manner.

Whichever is used—paper sticker or tape—it should not project beyond the edges of the head of the key or along its shaft.

The key thus prepared is hooked on the center chain; the line from the reel to which this chain is attached is drawn out and locked. The case is put in a rear trouser pocket with one of the two side keys wedged cross-wise to hold it open; the line is fed down the opposite sleeve of the jacket *past your wristwatch* and then tucked in underneath the band from the front. In this presentation only the key itself needs to be so secured, held in place by the watchband.

(Female performers will have to work out their own hookups depending on the type of clothing they're wearing.)

The only stipulation here is the placing of the line: it should go down the *left* sleeve if you write with your right hand—down the *right* sleeve if, like myself, you are left-handed. As mentioned, the case goes in the rear pocket of your pants on the opposite side from the sleeve being used.

Pencil or pen and pad are in the inside breast pocket.

THE GET-READY

What you are going to do here is get the key out of the sleeve and held against the pad in the hand, with the engraving next to the pad, and blank side out.

If, as I do, you present this as an encore effect, you have no problem; you simply get set while off-stage. The same is true if you use it as an opener. (Please note that it makes more sense as an encore, since it can be presented as a seemingly impromptu effect.) If, as many performers do, you work from an attaché case or similar item, have the pad and pen in there and simply set up behind the cover of the open lid; it takes but a moment.

If these do not suit in style, yet another approach is to have the mentalist's friend, a ping-pong ball, in your pocket; you take it out, saying you wish to select a lady at random, and *turn your back*, tossing the ball over your shoulder. This should give you all the cover you need.

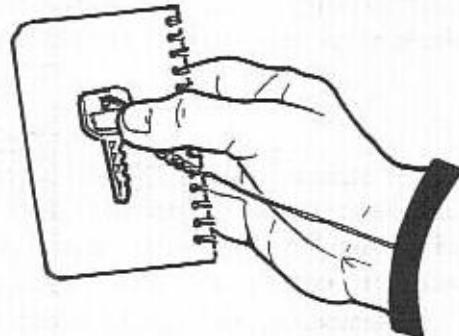
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Two points to be noted in this method: take the pad out before you turn your back, so it will not be thought you did anything 'under cover'—and throw the ball with the hand not holding the pad, of course; otherwise you could very well release the lock on the reel and this could present difficulties.

Now that you have the key held against the pad (the thumb presses on the hook and chain at one side of the head of the key) you are ready to present the effect.

PRESENTATION

You should choose a lady for this—and, for the particular dramatic line of this presentation, usually the more attractive the better. If the ping-pong ball is used, and a man has caught it, ask him to hand it to *"the prettiest lady near you."* Any hesitation on his part will probably get a laugh.



(If you are a female performer, you should of course pick an attractive man to assist; in what follows, we will for convenience assume a male performer and female spectator.)

For the moment the lady remains seated.

"And your name is? Karen. In just a moment, Karen, I am going to ask you to take a journey with me... an imaginary journey... but before that I want you to confirm that we've never met prior to this moment, we've not arranged anything?"

(In this presentation, please don't use lame lines like *"Then how do you know it's me?"* If you do, I will find you and kill you.)

Fine. Now I live in a very nice building out at the beach—it's called Bay Villa [of course you will refer to whatever you've had engraved on the key]—a nice place indeed, ten stories tall, a very big place really... now listen carefully, Karen; I'd like you to imagine you're standing in the lobby there, you've decided to visit a friend... you walk over to the elevator, the doors open and you step in. There are ten buttons there, one for each floor—which one do you push?"

Karen says, for example, "Six." You write 6 on the pad.

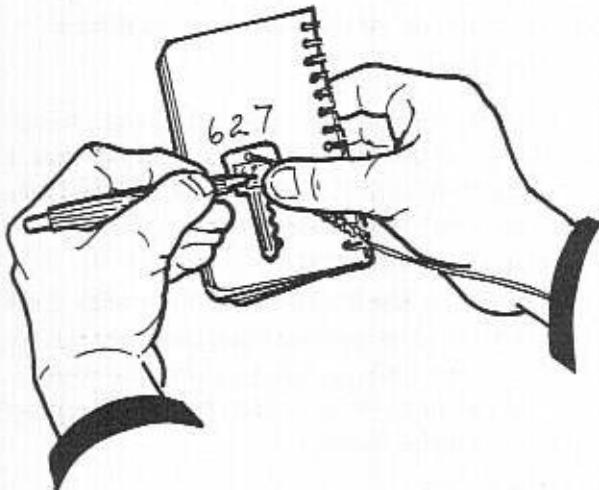
344 | *The elevator goes up to the floor, the doors open, and you step out. There's apartment Six-Oh-One in front of you; as you turn you see a long corridor. There are a hundred apartments on this floor... you start walking down the hallway.*

Finally you stop in front of one door. There's a brass plate on the door with the apartment number engraved on it. What number is that, Karen?"

"Six-twenty-seven," responds Karen.

You write the 27 after the 6 on the pad and 627 on the key. As you do this you say, *"Now that is really quite interesting—fascinating, in fact. Could you join me here on stage for just a moment, Karen?"* In saying this you gesture with the hand holding the pad, extending your arm slightly and unlocking the reel, but you do not release the key yet.

OCTASM



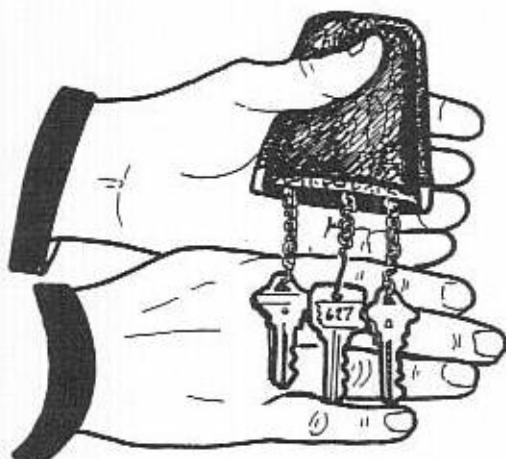
Wait until she is moving toward the stage and all eyes are on her; at this point your hand has dropped to your side and now you release the key. It goes up your sleeve and down into the key case.

You thank Karen for joining you; glance at the pad again with a quizzical shake of your head and then either put the pad on the table or hand it to a nearby spectator. Do *not* return it to your pocket; for the moment, you want to keep away from pockets.

To Karen you say, "You're sure that you've never been to Bay Villa—you just picked that apartment number out of the blue? That really is quite strange..."

(After checking to make sure the key is inside the case and correcting if it is not, you withdraw the case from your pocket, show it for a moment and then let the three keys drop out.)

"...as I said earlier, I live there..."



(You now display the keys by letting them rest against the fingers of the hand not holding the case; you then shift your holding position slightly so that the hand which holds the case grips the center chain through the case between thumb and forefinger.)

"...that's my mailbox key, and there's my car key... and this center one is my apartment key; it has something engraved on it. Karen, would you read out loud what's engraved there?"

Karen reads, "Bay Villa, Malibu, California."

"And you thought of Apartment Six-Twenty-Seven... would you turn over the key and tell everyone what's inscribed on the other side?"

Karen turns the key over and reads, "Six-twenty-seven."

You thank her again for her help and assist her in leaving the stage. A line which may be used either before she leaves the stage or as she is taking her seat is:

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"Now—I know you've never been to my apartment, Karen; and you know you've never been there—but [indicating her escort] what d'you suppose he thinks?"

NOTES

The line just suggested should only be used if you can do so with a light touch and without giving offense; the situation of the effect is strong enough that it needn't be belabored. The lady's reactions will indicate how to play it and you can omit the line if there is any possibility of embarrassing her which, as Ken Brooke used to say, is just not done in show business.

The foregoing routine can, of course, be used as an alternate with Don Wayne's Room Service effect. The routine Don provides is excellent and the prop well made; it's available from him. I should note that this plug is unsolicited and represents my honest opinion—it is, in fact, such a nice prop that I tried to talk Don out of putting it on the market.

CREDITS

This routine is basically a combination of the *Gold Medallion*²² and *Flying Ring*²³ effects from the brilliant mind of the late Al Koran. As noted in the beginning of the effect, the squeeze-purse version of the Koran keycase is the invention of Don Alan.

²²PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS, page 11; and AL KORAN'S LEGACY, page 37, both by Hugh Miller.

²³PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS, page 109.

CROSS-REFERENCE

Tapinage: see *Unknown Power*—page 28
and *Geminight*—page 515

Doublet: see *No/No.*—page 454
and *Trinitial*—page 751

Spyhole: see *Spywave*—page 694

Selectrick: see *Bellsamo*—page 571

MINDSCRIPT 1: *The Book Test*

[1982: Tape—1983: Book]

IT ISN'T MY purpose here to give you an encyclopedia of methods for doing the book test. For one thing, that's already been done in C.L. Boarde's *MAINLY MENTAL: VOL. TWO*.

For another—a large number of the available methods—and there are many for the book test—are to my mind worthless.

It seems to me that many such tests involve procedures that are completely alien to what you would naturally do; I am thinking in particular of effects using dice, counters, number-forcing pads and so forth. Consider: if you were really going to ask someone to choose a page in a book, you'd do something like simply telling them to open a book at any page. Any time you do something other than that, you have to have either a good reason or an elaborate presentation to cover up the methodology. It's better, where possible, to go for the more straightforward presentations.

For the most part, the book tests to be described in this section involve the choice of a page and word as the pages are riffled; this is an analogue to the riffle-force using a deck of cards, and in its application to the book test is generally credited to Chan Canasta.

Obviously, we can't all be Chan Canasta; however, by the use of various techniques of chicanery, we can create some convincing tests of telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition.

In most of the tests to be described, you hold the book and riffle it, and the spectator looks at a page. The reason *you* hold the book and he doesn't should seem to be, by means of your presentation, simply a matter of efficiency; it's quicker if you do it than if he takes the book and looks through it. A secondary presentational reason can be to show how fair (!) the selection is...

...these of course are not the *actual* reasons—but if properly set forth they will seem so to the audience.

Note: In what follows I am assuming—unless otherwise specified—the use of a standard four-by-seven-inch paperback book. Also—I will describe these tests, naturally, as *I* do them; I do understand that you will adapt them to your own method of working. I would suggest, however, that for purposes of learning them you try them my way first.

RIFFLE NO. 1

In this first test, which is one of telepathy, we use a standard paperback novel of about two hundred pages. The only stipulation here—which indeed holds true for all tests to be described in this section—is that the book does *not* have running titles, author's name, or chapter heads at the top of each page. If it did, then when you ask the spectator to think of the first word at the top of the page, he might reasonably be confused as to whether you meant the first word in that titling or the actual first word of text.

If you must for some reason use a book with running titles or captions at the top of the page, handle it this way: tell the spectator to look at the first paragraph, saying it may be several sentences or just one—okay?—and then to look at the first word in that paragraph.

The test as seen by the spectators is as follows:

From your side jacket pocket you remove a paperback book. You hold the book up—have a spectator come forward—and you riffle the pages of the book. (In doing this you are holding the book with its back to the audience, and riffling from the back of the book to the front, i.e., toward yourself; as you riffle, the spectator will see only the left-hand pages of the book.) He calls *stop* at some point, you stop the riffle and he looks at the first word on the page.

You drop the book back in your pocket.

You tell the spectator to concentrate on the word; from your pocket you now remove a business card—you write something on the card—hand it to the spectator, writing side down—and then have him announce the word that he's thinking of.

He does so, and then at your instruction turns over the card and reads it aloud; of course it bears the same word.

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At this point you remove the book from your pocket and drop it on the table; it is ungaffed and can be examined, though of course you do not specifically suggest this.

That's how the test looks. As to the method—it's a force. The way you do it is as follows:

In your right-hand jacket pocket you have a few business cards. Another business card is placed in the book, between pages 74 and 75 if you're working with a two hundred page book; in other words, somewhat less than halfway.

The business card is tucked right against the spine of the book; the long edge of the card parallels the long edge of the book; the top edge of the card is about one-half inch down from the top edge of the book.

With the book closed, you will note that if you riffle it, the business card acts as something of a short card, and you can stop the riffle without any trouble at all at the page where the card has been inserted.

You note the first word on page 74; the book thus prepared is placed in your side jacket pocket along with the cards.

In performance:

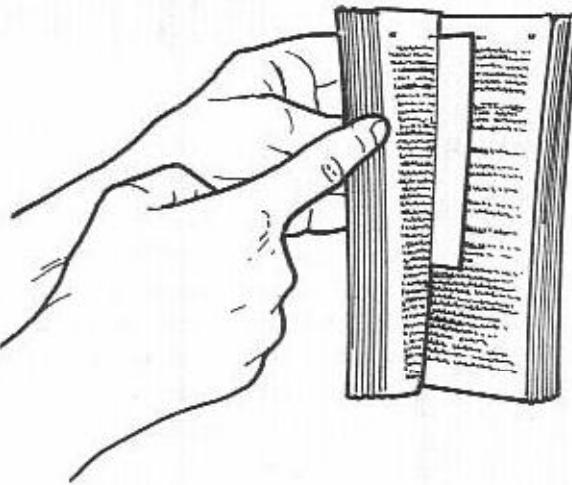
You remove the book from your pocket and hold it as previously indicated. With your forefinger you riffle the pages and the spectator calls out *stop*. You stop at the force page, of course, and tell him to look at the first word on the page facing him, which will be the word you have previously noted. You replace the book in your pocket.

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You talk for a few moments about how the spectator has to visualize the word, letter by letter—and then you reach into your pocket and remove a business card...

...in fact what you do is to remove the business card *from the book*. This is very simple; just let your thumb run along the top edge of the book until you feel the break and then the thumb goes in and draws out the card. This is best done by first sliding the card a bit out from the spine and then drawing it upward.

You take the card from your pocket and on it you write the force word. You hand it to the spectator writing side down—you have him name the word—and then he turns the card over and reads it aloud.



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That's all there is to the basic structure of the effect; however, let's go into it in a bit more detail.

Obviously, this effect stands or falls on just how convincing the riffle force is; if you have seen people doing the riffle-force with cards you know that it looks either extremely fair or extremely obvious. We are going to try here to develop ways to make it seem extremely fair.

First of all—by how tightly you hold the book in the left hand, by how deeply into the thumb crotch you hold it, you can control with what force the business card operates as a short card. This is important; you don't want a sound like a click, or a small pistol shot, to go off when you stop at the force page. What you do want is the minimal amount of differentiation that will allow you to stop at it without fail. The 'click' is also a function of how far back you bend the pages when you are doing the riffle. In about an hour of experimentation and practice all of this can be learned well enough to show you just about the right amount of force required.

The other half of the technique of doing the riffle force—the timing—is somewhat more difficult, because here you're interacting with the spectator.

It is my suggestion that if you're going to perform this effect, you first do another effect with the same spectator. The reason for this is to establish reaction time: does the spectator immediately do what is instructed? Does he or she pick up on what you say immediately? Or is your spectator, to put it politely, a little... slow?

If the spectator is slow, or dull, you pick someone else for this test, because the quicker a response you can get—and the faster you can therefore riffle the pages—the more convincing it is. This is because, if the riffle is done fairly quickly, the audience finds it much more difficult to differentiate the point at which the spectator says *stop* from the point where you actually *do stop*.

For that reason you don't want someone who's slow—or goofy—or giggly; you want someone who's willing to cooperate to some reasonable degree, and who's interested in what you're doing.

(NOTE 1993: You might wish to practice this technique in live performance by using one of Larry Becker's excellent Flashback books, or a similarly prepared peekbook. This way you can attempt the riffle force and, should it fail, immediately proceed with the word divination using the peek principle.)

Related to this—an angle you may wish to experiment with is to covertly watch the spectator's lips and jaw. Just before the spectator speaks to say *stop*, there will be a slight movement, a little twitch we might say, of either lips or the edge of the jaw. This varies with different spectators but you may find it useful. Obviously, if you have done a previous effect where this spectator was required to tell you when to stop or start doing something—a dealing effect, for example—then you know how this individual reacts and may or may not be able to use this, as the case may be.

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In doing the riffle force, you have the back of the book directly toward the spectator's eyes, flat-on, so that as you're riffling they cannot see the page numbers. The reason for this is as follows: from time to time you will run into a spectator who, after you've done the riffle force and stopped at the force position, says, "No, I don't want that page; I want one a few pages back."

At this point you will realize two things: the first is that you've made a bad choice of spectator, and the second is that you now have to get yourself out of trouble.

The way you do this is as follows:

With your most beatific smile, you say, "Certainly!" and run back a few pages until the spectator indicates satisfaction; when he does, have him look at and remember the first word on the page. You then let the book close and drop it on the table.

You reach into your pocket, take one of the extra (loose) business cards, and write on it the force word; having done this you place the card writing side down on the table.

You now ask the spectator to announce to everyone the word that he was thinking of. (Note: it is not "Tell me what you're thinking of," but "Tell the audience what you're thinking of." He might not feel like telling you.)

He does so, and your smile becomes, if possible, even more beatific. "Excellent," you say, "let's try it with someone else."

You now go to some other spectator with the book, and execute the riffle force.

You then proceed on a variation of what you might have done originally; you put the book back in your pocket, extract from it the business card, and write on the card the word just announced by the first spectator.

You drop this card on top of the other one on the table. The second spectator announces to everyone the word he chose, you pick up the two cards and hand them to another spectator to read aloud...

...and again you have triumphed.

By not letting the spectator actually see the page numbers as you riffle the pages, you avoid more than one potential problem, as this also prevents him from reading anything as the pages go by; obviously, if he *saw* what the force word was, it would seem a bit peculiar that it turned out to be the word chosen by the second spectator.

It should be pointed out that such a spectator as here described may not be trying to be difficult or perverse—he may simply want the freest choice possible, and have no idea that this is going to make any difficulty for you.

Do remember that spectators don't know the restrictions of your method; therefore—if for example you're been shuffling a deck and you hand it to a spectator and ask him to cut it—and he shuffles it—it doesn't mean he's *'out to get you.'* It may simply mean that he was so very certain that you were shuffling

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the cards fairly and that he couldn't imagine that his shuffling the cards would make any difference.

Also you must accept that sooner or later, in any effect where you give spectators instructions, they are going to misunderstand those instructions; you therefore should always research any effects you're actually going to use, to figure out what you will do in that event.

I might further point out that this is a good way to determine the practicality of any given effect; the more instructions the spectator has to follow in order for the effect to come off successfully, the less practical it is.

To relate all this back to the book test—the reason that you have the spectator think of the very first word on the page, and not '*add the page numbers together, count down to that line, etc.*', is simply that the more opportunities you give a spectator to make a mistake, the more likely it is that such a mistake will occur.

A number of spectators do not count very well—some of them don't even read very well—and for reasons too complicated to go into here, you will find them populating your audiences in ever-increasing numbers.

Lest you think I am overstating the case, a brief anecdote:

I know that many of you are familiar with Al Mann's excellent book test called *The Lexicon Phenomena*; for those who are not, it is a dictionary test involving a 'word power' list of four hundred pairs of words, one pair of which is chosen and looked up in the dictionary by the spectator; the performer then divines the words.

Not too long ago (written in 1983) Mr. Mann himself performed this effect at the Magic Castle—and a few times during the week he ran into a bit of trouble with it, not through any fault of his own but because he happened to get spectators who *didn't know how to look words up in a dictionary*; they did not understand the plan on which a dictionary is arranged.

Now—you may laugh—but this is a very real problem and one which you should take into consideration.

I should also point out in this connection that for those of you who do such effects as the 'addition test' using the Dunninger/Baker Slate, Add-A-Number, or other such devices, be advised that addition is likewise becoming an arcane skill...

...so if you want to do this sort of test, it's probably wise to use such items as Bob Mason's *Predicta-Total* or Mann's *Addition Slate* where *you* do the addition and the spectators simply follow along, nodding their heads dutifully whether or not they are actually doing the addition.

(Incidentally, I wish I had a nickel for every mentalist I've seen who does the addition effect and, when the spectator has added wrong, says, '*Uh, well, now, wait a minute, let's check that*,' and goes through the numbers again coming up with the correct total. The immediate question that suggests itself is: How did the performer know the adding had been done wrong unless he knew what

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the total was supposed to be? The aura of mystery, you may imagine, is somewhat dissipated.

Now—and none too soon, I hear you say—let us return to the book test.

RIFFLE NO. 2

(Impromptu)

Here we're going to consider prediction routines; our first one, like the previous effect, uses a paperback book of two hundred pages or so. This book is unprepared. The only other requirement is a deck of cards, likewise unprepared. Both cards and book can, in fact, be borrowed immediately before doing the test, and the effect is thus completely impromptu.

The effect looks like this:

You take a card from the deck in your right hand, and pick up the book with your left; you hold the book with your fingers along the spine, which is parallel to the floor—the open side of the book is upward. The back of the book is flat-on to the spectators.

You say that you are going to place the card in the book at any point a spectator specifies; you briefly demonstrate this action. Before that selection is made, you say, you'll write a prophecy. You write something on a piece of paper, fold it up and hand it to someone to hold.

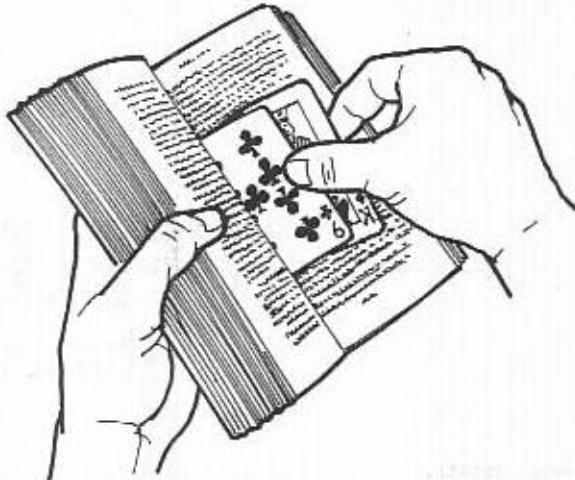
Taking up card and book again, you do as you said you would; you riffle the book with your left thumb and, very fairly, at whatever point the spectator specifies, you place the card into the book. The spectator has been seated throughout this procedure, but you now have her come forward—you riffle through the book to where the card lies—she looks at the first word on the page—the spectator holding the prediction opens it and reads it and of course you are correct.

In fact, this must be one of the few book tests that depends on a double lift.

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When you take the card from the deck in your right hand, you take two cards as one; you are holding them face up, gripped along the right-hand edge between fingers and thumb.

As you talk about what you're going to do, you seemingly suit the action to the word; you riffle through the book with your thumb—at one point you stop and place the two cards into the book as one; the cards go in back to the audience (you are holding cards and book vertically); you now remove the rear card only (i.e., the card whose back the audience just saw). As you do this you spot the first word on the left-hand page. (In this case it *could* be the right-hand page if you wish—but let's keep matters simple.)



In any case, having removed the card, back still to the audience, you place the book down on the table and put the card face down on top of it. Now you write your prediction of the noted word and hand it to a spectator to hold.

Picking up the card in the right hand and the book in the left as before, you have a spectator call stop as you riffle the pages and you very fairly put the card in at that point—the back of the card, of course, always to the audience.

Now you have the spectator come forward and you riffle to the page. Of course you riffle to the page where the first card lies—the one whose face was seen by the spectators—and in doing this you follow the very simple rule of riffling from the side nearest the force card (if the force card is toward the front and the indifferent card is toward the rear, you riffle from the front—and vice versa). Your riffle will automatically stop at the point where the card lies.

You make no point of the fact that this is the card they originally saw; of course it is! You do not want to over-prove anything; but the idea that it is a specific card will register to imply that you've done no switching or other chicanery.

You have the spectator read the words aloud; you now do a very brief recap and then direct attention toward the spectator who holds the prediction. As everyone focuses on *that* person, you apparently toy with the card and book. Actually, you remove the card from the book and riffle to the other card; you drop the card you hold into the book next to the one already there.

Then, seeming to think better of it, you remove the two cards as one and place them back on the deck.

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Thus—the book is now clean, the cards are back where they should be—all's well with the world.

Now it is in the nature of this particular test that about twenty-five percent of the time, when the spectator calls stop, you will stop where the hidden card lies. If this should happen you simply put the indifferent card in behind the force card, square them and hold them as one with your thumb while the spectator looks at the force word. In this case your cleanup is much simpler as the two cards are already together.

When, in the course of the effect, you are doing the riffle, do have the back of the book almost flat-on to the spectator as described above. You do this so that she will not be able to see just how deeply into the book the card goes; if you are really worried about this you can simply pick another spectator to come forward and look at the word.

In this test it is the specific identity of the card that strengthens the force angle; it is therefore possible to apply this procedure to other approaches. You can, for example, use a spectator's business card; if you have another blank white card of the same dimensions—since the spectators will only see the white back of the card—you can see how this would work.

Another approach—possibly less practical in some senses—is the idea of using credit cards. Credit cards from the same company do have the advantage of all looking alike and being highly recognizable and unique nevertheless, but it is difficult to hold two of them together as one; you'll have to play around with this.

Other cards that could be used would include club membership cards and driver's licenses; the whole concept behind such items is that they are generally identical in appearance but also one-of-a-kind objects, and therefore the idea of a duplicate is subconsciously discarded by the spectators.

Whatever you use, again, do not make any point of the uniqueness of the card or otherwise draw specific attention to it; let the spectators realize that for themselves. Thus, to go to any particular lengths to get a specific business card, etc., to use, is probably not a good idea. Let this part of the procedure be a very casual, offhand thing.

You could, of course, carry around your own deck with one duplicate card—or a supply of cards to match decks you might encounter—but I feel the real value of this test is that it is *totally* impromptu, requiring no preparation of any kind. Used this way, I think you'll find it a worthwhile addition to your repertoire.

NOTE

If, in doing this effect, you happen to be handed a deck with a very obvious one-way-back design—a horse's head, for example—do make sure that the backs of both cards being used are oriented the same way; otherwise—during the cleanup phase it might seem that the card magically turned end-for-end in the book; an interesting effect, perhaps, but not the one I assume you wish to create.

RIFFLEDEX

You show a paperback dictionary of approximately eight hundred pages; the one I use is the AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY.

You also show a sealed pay envelope which, you explain, contains your impression of an event that may happen. Asking for the initials of some spectator, you write these as large as possible on the face of the envelope; you then take the envelope in the same hand which holds the dictionary—which is to say, the left hand (the envelope is clipped between first and second fingers).

Approaching a spectator, you begin to riffle through the pages of the book, using the first finger of the other hand, indicating that he should stop you wherever he likes; he does so.

Now here's where things get interesting. You ask him to call out the word. You then ask, *'Do you like that word—or would you like to reject it and choose another?'* Let's presume he says he would like to change his mind. You continue the riffle; again he stops you at whatever point he likes; again you have him call out the word; and again you ask if he is satisfied or if he would like to make a further choice. If he says he would like to make yet another choice, you proceed as before, until finally he is satisfied...

...and it is crystal clear that he has had an absolutely free choice.

This having been established, you tear off the top of the pay envelope and extract a folded index card. You reiterate the spectator's choice (he had, of course called off the word himself) and then unfold the card. There, written in large letters with magic marker, is *the same word*.

The envelope is otherwise empty and—though you do not suggest it—can be examined by anyone.

MINDSCRIPT 1: THE BOOK TEST

As you will appreciate from the description, there is no nail-writer work and there is also no pocket work.

The general methodology is this:

While the spectator apparently has a completely free choice of words, he is actually limited to only ten; the predictions for those words are in the dictionary itself.

There's a little bit more to it than that...

...you need, first of all, a paperback dictionary as described above; you also need ten index cards, a magic marker, and a pay envelope of a size to comfortably take an index card when it has been folded into quarters.

Open the dictionary to page 74; note the first word on the page and write it on one of your index cards. Turn to page 150 and repeat the process; continue this, going seventy-five pages at a jump, through the rest of the dictionary, always using the first word on the left-hand page. As you write each prediction card you fold it once each way, making sure the creases are very sharp.

The sharp edges of the fold are to insure that the folded card will lie as flat as possible.

This done, you insert the folded card in the dictionary at the page bearing its word. It is positioned, in fact, much as was the business card in *Riffle No. 1*—which is to say, it is pushed right in next to the spine, and with the top edge of the folded card about half an inch down from the top of the book. In doing this, position the card so the long edges are against the spine, the single fold nearest the outer edge of the book.

Your only other preparation is to seal the pay envelope—empty.

When all the predictions are in place in the dictionary it may seem to bulge or show obvious breaks. There are two things you can do about this: the first is to make sure you use the very thinnest index card stock you can find (or a heavy bond paper stock)—and the second is to put the book in a clamp or under a heavy weight for some time.

I should also point out that these breaks when visible at all are only apparent from the top edge of the dictionary—so, if it seems necessary, keep the top edge of the book tilted slightly toward yourself. You will recall that you are working with a seated spectator; therefore, when he looks at the book you hold in natural fashion at chest level, his gaze will perforce be *upward*; it will thus be impossible for him to see the upper edge of the book. When the spectator looks at the word his gaze is in from the side, not down from the top.

In performance you follow generally what was given in the effect description. You ask for a spectator's initials—usually those of the spectator who you'll have make the selection—and write these as large as possible on the manila envelope. You clip the envelope between first and second fingers of the left hand which, you will recall, also holds the dictionary.

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Now you begin the riffle-force procedure. What you do, of course, is simply to riffle to the first break (which, since you are riffling back to front (toward yourself) as usual, will be the one at page 750 or thereabouts). If the spectator calls stop at this point, fine; if not you continue the riffle—*without interruption*—to the *next* break, and continue until he tells you to stop.

When he does—which will almost certainly be within the first two or three break points—you pull back the corner of the page so he can see the word. Since the folded prediction is pressed against the opposite page (the one nearest him), he won't be able to see it. At your behest he calls out the word—and now you give him the option; does he want this word or would he like to go on?

(In order to strengthen the final effect you may actually wish to goad him into going on, perhaps acting arrogant or supercilious—unless, of course, this is your normal mode of performing...!)

In any case...

...let us say he wishes to continue; you proceed with the riffle, stopping at the next break-point after he calls stop. Since there are ten such points in the book, and your riffle is a fairly brisk one, this can be done in a very convincing and fair manner.

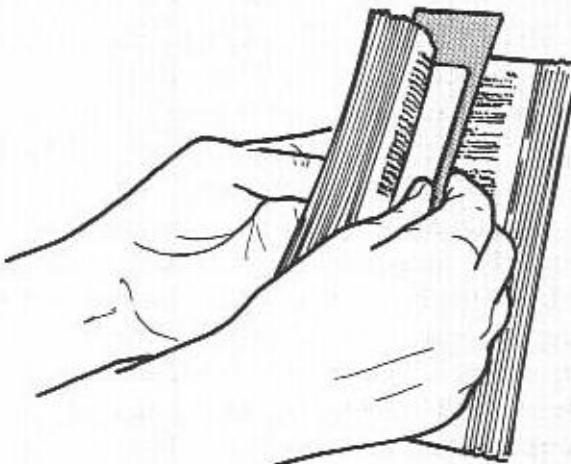
Also, of course, the very point that he *can* change his mind as often as he likes (or so it seems) eliminates the idea of a force and takes the heat off the riffle procedure itself.

Finally he indicates that he wants the word he has just called out.

At this point your right hand takes the envelope from between the left fingers and places it in the break in the dictionary as a bookmark, letting the dictionary then close. In doing this you insert the envelope behind (from your point of view) the prediction card. The envelope projects about an inch from the top of the book.

364

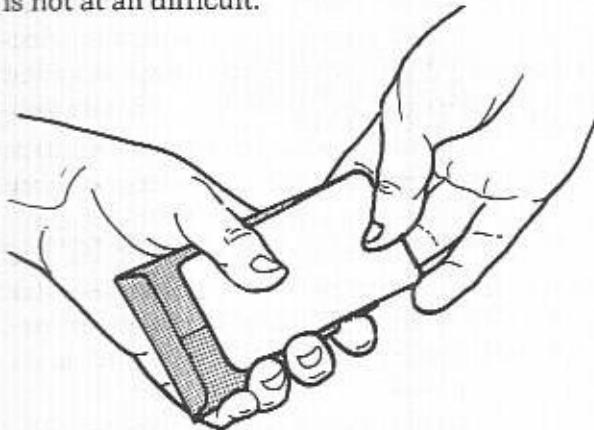
You talk for a few moments about the test, the freedom of choice, etc.—and in doing this you point at the book with your right hand, then gesture to the spectator—in other words use your right hand enough to justify the action of placing the envelope in the book momentarily. If you are working with a table, you might put the book down for a moment as you talk about the conditions; if you use



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this thought, make sure the book is clearly visible at the front edge of the table so there can be no thought of a switch or substitution.

Completing these histrionics, and with book in hand, you reach into the book and remove the prediction envelope with, of course, the prediction behind it. In doing this your right thumb will have to slide the folded prediction card slightly to the right so that it will be centered behind the envelope. This is not at all difficult.



Your left hand places the dictionary down on the table or replaces it in your attaché case. You then take the envelope, prediction still behind it, into the left hand, and your right hand now rips off the top edge of the envelope. Your right fingers go into the envelope, the thumb going down behind it and pressing against the prediction card.

Apparently you extract the prediction from the envelope; actually, of course, you pull it up from behind.

You drop the envelope on the table and unfold the prediction for all to read.

Now—that is the general methodology and procedure for the first version. Before we go into the other approaches, a couple of points: one might wish to write a prediction along the lines of, *'I predict that on the night of November 14th a certain person will choose a word from a dictionary and that word will be [whatever].'*

There are a couple of things wrong with this—the first is that most of what you are telling them they already know; they've seen it happen. The second is that if you've got all that writing, the prediction word itself will have to be written fairly small, and thus the audience—instead of being able to read the word for themselves—will have to take the word (figuratively and literally) of the spectator who reads out the prediction!

Whenever you can avoid this 'mentalism by testimony' rather than by direct experience, it's for the better.

The second point I'd like to mention is that, since the preparation for this test is really rather elementary—you simply have to write ten words on cards, fold them and stick them in a book—it can be done with a borrowed book. Of course, if you should do this, you will have to make sure you have an opportunity to remove the unused predictions from the book before returning it... otherwise it just might lend a clue to the method...

... a simpler way to use the 'borrowed book' angle is to have a few of your own copies of current best-sellers prepared; when you get to the venue you

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borrow a book matching one of your prepared books—at some later point you simply bring out your own prepared book, use it, toss it back into your attaché case—and after the show return the borrowed copy.

I should point out, however, that the procedure of this test is seemingly so completely fair that you really don't have to worry about the added point of doing it with a borrowed book. I don't think it makes any difference whatever to those spectators who are aware that you *are* using a borrowed book. Do remember that they have proof positive that the spectator making the selection *does* have a free choice—so that even if there were such things as gaffed books (perish the thought!), they can't see how such a book would help you.

The only thing that could be called a move in this whole routine is the action of extracting the prediction (apparently) from within the pay envelope. Since pay envelopes are rather cheap, I suggest you seal a dozen or so folded cards genuinely within these envelopes, and then tear the envelopes open and extract the cards while watching yourself in a mirror so that you can see what the real action looks like. This done, seal up a couple dozen empty envelopes and practice the fake removal. Since this is the only real work you have to do, it's worth a bit of practice.

It is not absolutely necessary that you do this with a sealed envelope; if you use an unsealed one, however, make sure the flap is creased sharply so it will lie flat when you're putting the envelope in the book. You might want to play around with the following alternative handling...

PEEKQUIVALENT

Here's another version of the same general test:

In this presentation you hand the prediction envelope to someone to hold. Again you riffle the book and again the spectator has a choice as to where you stop, though in this case the word is not read aloud. When the spectator choosing the page has made a final decision she *does* read off the word—the spectator holding the prediction opens it; it is, of course, correct.

As you'll note, the major point—aside from the prediction being held by a spectator—is that the person choosing the word doesn't get to look at the places she stops until she's made a final decision.

The reason for that is a simple one; as with the previous test, you have a number of break-points; in this case, however, all the words are *synonyms*.

For example: in a book I used for this test several years ago, I was able to find in the upper left corner the words SHIP, BOAT, YACHT, LINER and FREIGHTER. The prediction itself was simply a line drawing of a boat—and I talked about it being the "... picture I'd received in my mind earlier in the day..." To facilitate the riffle-force I had five cut-down pieces of index card stuck into the book at the appropriate points.

(In a later variation of this, which you may think is painting the lily a bit, I punched holes in the bottom of these partial cards and attached threads to them; these threads were led out at the bottom of the book and tied together in a knot. With this preparation—after the word selection I would extract something from my attaché case, the hand holding the book resting on the open lid of the case, with the outside of the lid facing the audience; my other hand would simply reach up and grab the threads, pulling the five break-cards out of the book. The book could

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then be left behind for anyone to look at. Trust me—it isn't worth the trouble.)

Now I will not pretend to you that it is easy to locate a book that has a number of synonyms in the upper left corner of the left page as required. It can be done, however; I have found such books a few times. Your best bet might be a genre western or combat novel, where a number of synonyms for *gun* would be likely to appear.

I should mention that the particular book I used was a novel in which the central character was a sailor; this was not obvious from the title of the book. Similar books may be found where much of the action is focused on a specific profession.

It does take a good deal of effort to find such books, but—who ever told you that mentalism was easy...?

However, there are other approaches to this methodology...

...for example:

I have beside me as I write a copy of the 1979-80 revised edition of TV MOVIES, edited by Leonard Maltin, a paperback edition published by Signet (451-E8293); cover price \$2.95. You should be able to find it in a used bookstore.

Having acquired the book—if you look on page 170, the first movie you see described in the upper left corner is DIAMOND HEAD; if you turn to page 634, and look in the same position, the movie described is SKYJACKED. These two films are of interest to us because their featured performers are *Charlton Heston* and *Yvette Mimieux* in both films.

For your prediction, go to a movie memorabilia shop and purchase a still from one film or the other which features the two actors together in the shot. This should be one in which they are not wearing identifiable costumes or uniforms that would definitely place them in one film or the other. You should also caption them with rub-on lettering for the few people who may not recognize them.

In this method you only have the two options—so what you do is to riffle to the first break (page 634); if the spectator stops, all well and good. If not you simply continue on to the other one; if the spectator *does* stop you at the first break, you then have the option as in previous tests of asking the spectator if he wants you to continue.

If he does, there's a slight variation in handling, because you've got a long stretch between 634 and 170—so you begin talking to him along the lines of '*I understand that you'd like to have another choice so we'll continue to let the pages go by and you say stop whenever you like...*' Well, by the time you've said that, or something perhaps a bit more scintillating, you're now fairly close to 170 and so you shut up and wait for him to call stop—and then conclude the riffle force as usual.

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DIAMOND HEAD



Charlton Heston & Yvette Mimieux

SKYJACKED

If you plan to do this effect as a regular program item, it would probably make sense to have the prediction reproduced with good quality photocopies, since you use one each time.)

Another approach to this methodology might involve a music catalog, which would have the same piece listed at widely separated points as performed by different artists; these would have to be instrumentals, as vocals would be identifiable as particular artists, and the piece would have to be a highly recognizable one... one of the 'greater' of the Fifty Great Moments in Music.

Of course, you've inserted pieces of card to enable you to stop at the two force pages.

(NOTE 1993: You might wish to adapt a Richard Himber notion¹ to this effect by mounting the picture on a white card, leaving a blank area at top and bottom. In the upper area you letter DIAMOND HEAD and in the lower SKYJACKED. This prediction is then sealed in an envelope of just such a size to take it comfortably.

You open the envelope by cutting off one end with a pair of scissors; needless to say, you cut off the end bearing the title not chosen, and thus you can remove a photo of the two stars which bears the title of their selected film.

¹See Fulves' MAGIC BOOK, page 137.

JATO

For our final version of this particular test we're going to use a concept of J.G. Thompson—*Jet Thought*².

In Thompson's original effect you wrote a prediction on a card and sealed it in an envelope which had been shown otherwise empty, and set it out on display. One of five cities was chosen; you then opened the envelope, extracted the prediction and it was seen to be correct.

In fact, the original envelope was switched for a second envelope which contained the five possible predictions. Four of these five prediction cards had successively wider strips trimmed from the long upper edge; this meant that when the five were stacked together, the 'front' one being the shortest, they formed a sort of index—so that, when you opened the envelope, you could reach in and *without looking* quickly extract the correct prediction.

In the Thompson method the original envelope was switched by a sleight-of-hand technique vaguely akin to a top change; however, the same thing can be accomplished with the standard flapless envelope switch, a technique with which you are undoubtedly familiar.

The preparation for this version of the test is:

You select five points in a dictionary—write the first word from the left-hand page on your five cards, trimmed as indicated above; the cards are placed as a stack into an envelope which in turn is put on a packet of envelopes. One envelope, flap cut off, is put above the loaded envelope.

The five force points in the dictionary are prepared with pieces of index card as previously described.

²As noted earlier in this volume, *Jet Thought* was originally marketed through Ed Mellon and was later published in *Pallbearers Review Folio* No. 6, page 497.

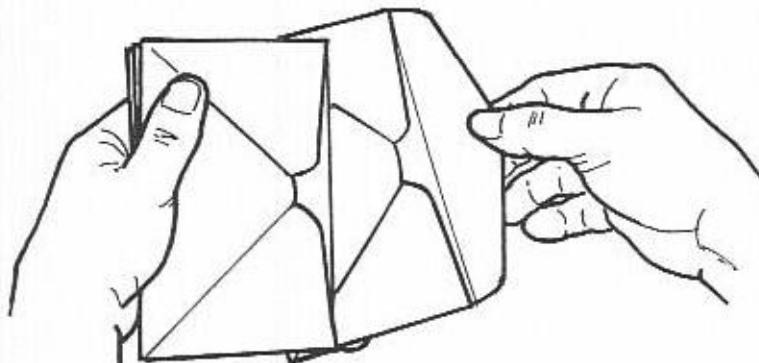
MINDSCRIPT 1: THE BOOK TEST



You show your prediction card and insert it into the flapless envelope.

(Two points: when you hold the card, grasp it along the upper edge, so that the audience cannot tell exactly how wide it is. For the same reason you use double-blank index cards, *not* lined ones.)

Having inserted the prediction in the flapless envelope, you take the second envelope by the flap and pull it free of the stack. The other envelopes are placed aside and the prediction envelope is put on display in a clipstand or some such.



You proceed as before, riffle-forcing one of the five break-points—and as in the first version you can have the spectator read off the words if you wish before deciding against them. When he's made his decision you pick up the envelope, open it and extract the correct prediction.

The spectator now calls out the word, and you turn the prediction card around...

...obviously, since you know the order of the break-points in the dictionary and of the predictions in the envelope, *you don't have to look at either of them* during the necessary actions. If there was only one card in the envelope you wouldn't have to look at it to extract it; your actions therefore must simulate that honest extraction.

Do make certain that your prediction envelope is of sufficiently heavy stock that when you've extracted the prediction card the audience can't see the shadow of other predictions within.

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(NOTE 1993: As an alternative to the Jet Thought procedure, you might use my *Pentab* which you will find on page 647.)

Since you're using five predictions rather than ten, your dictionary should be around four hundred pages; many such are available.

DUBBOOK

Now as a change of pace I will describe a telepathy-clairvoyance routine that I've used for over twenty years. It employs a paperback book and is a combination of ideas from Tony Corinda and Tom Sellers.

For this you need two things:

The first is a Chromatic™ pen. This is a slim ball-point pen (available at most stationers) which, though it appears to have only one writing element, actually has two. One of these cartridges is emptied. There are two ways of doing this: (a) simply scribble with it until it is written dry or (b) ream out the ink by inserting a thin wire, and then let the cartridge soak in alcohol until it can be rinsed clean. In either case you must make sure that all traces of ink are gone and the empty cartridge leaves no mark. Depending on which cartridge you extend, you can have the pen write or not write, as you wish.

The second item required is a paperback book of one hundred fifty to two hundred pages.

Since you are going to deface and destroy a couple of pages in the course of the routine, this should not be a valuable book, but one you can afford to destroy...a biography of a sports figure with a drug problem, for example; there are a lot of those available.

To prepare:

Extend the writing cartridge of the pen, open the book to about the center, and make an X which completely fills one page—one line goes from upper left to lower right corner, the other line vice versa.

Note the word where the two lines intersect at the center and remember it.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

In performance you show the book and open it to the back page; using the pen in writing mode, you make a large X on this page to show the spectator what you want him to do. You then hand him the book, tell him to place it behind his back and to open it somewhere around the center. (It may seem odd to make a specific request like this—but you don't want him to open the book just a few pages in; if he does, when you show the marked page he will know that this is not where he marked it. I have never known any spectator to think there was anything peculiar about this request.)

As he's making this selection you switch the pen into nonwriting mode; this is done by simply twisting the upper part of the pen.

You hand the pen to the spectator; he places it behind his back and makes an X as requested. You then tell him to return the pen to you so he can do something a little further.

Now you tell him to open the book again, but this time *away* from the center—so, you say, he will not choose the same page. Having done this he is to rip this page out of the book, place it against the front of the book, and bring it out; you point out that in this way you can't even get a glimpse of the *back* of the chosen page.

During this you switch the pen back into writing mode.

You hand the pen to him and tell him to again make an X, completely filling the page, as he did before; then he is to note the word where the two lines intersect.

He does so; turning slightly away for a moment, you tell him to put down the book and fold the page once each way, writing side (X'd side) *inside*.

As he does this you point out the difference between telepathy and clairvoyance—that telepathy is the sensing of a thought in another mind without an object being required—whereas clairvoyance is the reverse, the sensing of information about an object without another mind being involved in the process.

Of course, now he has in his mind a particular word—the word represented by the folded page. You say, *"Since we're going to try telepathy first, the object has to be destroyed."* At this point you take the folded page from him. (Note: you do not ask for it—you *take* it.) You tear the folded page into bits and let them flutter to the ground...in doing this, as you'll hardly be surprised to learn, you execute the torn center.

You now pick up the book and say that if you're successful with the telepathy you will try the clairvoyance test, which is, of course, much more difficult. As you're talking you use the book as a screen, opening up the torn center behind it and noting the word that has been X'd. You then proceed with the telepathic divination in piecemeal fashion, during which time you refold the center and fingerpalm it.

You hand the book to the spectator, explaining that now you will try to divine the word at the X'd page still in the book, a word known to no one.

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With appropriate acting you announce the force word on the X'd page which you noted during preparation of the book—the spectator looks through the book, finds the marked page...and of course you are correct. As you put away the pen you dispose of the palmed center.

You will appreciate that, as long as you carry around the Chromatic pen, you can prepare for this test in about three seconds flat.

It may occur to you that since the clairvoyance part of this routine is brought about by a force, it can as well be done as a prediction. Indeed it could...but there are a number of good prediction effects about, not very many good clairvoyance tests; I think you will find this to be most effective presented as indicated.

CREDITS

The pre-X'd word and non-writing pen idea is Tom Sellers³ and the application of this idea to a Chromatic pen appeared in Predict-O, a marketed variation of the Sellers effect by Harry Lorayne; the X'd book page is Tony Corinda's, in its application to the center-tear⁴.

³Tom Sellers' NEW AGE BOOK TEST, released as No. 9 of the Thayer Trick Of The Month Club, second series (March 1933).

⁴See *The Crossword Puzzle* in THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, page 211.

MISCELLANEA

The last part of this section will be something of a potpourri.

Regarding the very first test described—there are a couple of other tests you might want to think about combining with this. The first is Ray Hyman's; it appeared in his June 1952 *Linking Ring Parade*, and I refer you to that source for full presentational details.⁵

The concept we're interested in, however, is this: if you have a business card on which writing has been done with a soft lead pencil, and this card is used by a spectator as a book mark when he chooses a page—then if the spectator extracts the card from the book as you grip it firmly, it will leave a mark not unlike daub. You can then, of course, locate the chosen page—and if he has looked at a specific word, such as the first word on the page, you will be able to name it.

Since we have precisely that situation at the conclusion of my book test, the Hyman test might be a very nice follow-up.

Another test which uses a book and several small white cards is described in THE MENTAL MAGICK OF BASIL HORWITZ⁶; since it is still on the market I am not at liberty to disclose the method. However, if you can acquire it you will see how nicely it would fit in with the test we've been discussing.

SideSidAl

Now let's look at a combination of a couple of book tests which I think will amuse you even if you never use it...

...both of them involve the use of vest-pocket dictionaries, smaller than the ones we've been using in previous tests—they're about an inch and a half wide by five inches tall.

⁵Vol. 32, No. 4; page 58.

⁶Page 9.

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The two tests are Sid Lorraine's *40,000 Words*⁷ and the Al Baker Dictionary Test⁸.

In Lorraine's effect you have someone write a word on a card and then insert the card into the dictionary; at some later point you divine the word. You can do this because the back cover and all the inside pages have had a window cut out; through which you could read the writing on the card.

The Baker test had two phases; in the first the spectator chose a page number by calling it aloud—you wrote down a word on one of a stack of white cards you held—when the word at the chosen page was checked, your noted word was correct. This could be presented either as telepathy or precognition. This was accomplished by having a cue-list printed on two of the white cards in the stack you held.

The second phase involved a postcard which was inserted into the dictionary wherever the spectator indicated; this postcard had attached to it an extra flap with a page from the dictionary glued to its inner surface. In this way, when you opened the dictionary at the point where the postcard was inserted, the spectator presumably saw the page he'd chosen; actually, of course, he was looking at the page mounted on the flap.

My thought for routining these is simply this:

You perform the first phase of the Baker routine, involving the cue-list. As your prediction is being checked, you switch out the 'solid' dictionary for the Lorraine dictionary with the window.

Now you proceed with the second phase of the Baker test, involving the faked postcard. The point of all this is that the spectator has an apparently free choice of a page—you open the dictionary at that page—and you then proceed with the divination.

Thus, in addition to executing the necessary force for the second phase of the routine, the postcard gaff makes the dictionary seem ordinary when it is anything but.

Following this, you can immediately go into the Lorraine routine making use of the window. You might logically enough use a duplicate ungaffed postcard for the spectator to write on.

⁷ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 71.

⁸A marketed item, which eventually was included in Burling Hull's ENCYCLOPEDIC DICTIONARY OF MENTALISM, VOL. 2; page 34.

FINAL NOTES

To return to some of the tests earlier discussed—I should point out that all the tests which force words can also be used to force *page numbers*. What that means is that, if you have a cue-list with those page numbers noted and words from several *other* books at those pages listed, you can have several spectators take part and divine the words in all of the books. The advantage here is that you don't have to prepare a cue-list for *every page* in every book. Since, in this version, the book you hold is never handled by the spectators, you can have the cue-list glued to the front page of it.

Speaking of multiple book tests...

...in recent years there have been in print a number of tests involving the basic Annemann methodology of putting a number of duplicate books inside various different covers.⁹

This is, in fact, a very useful procedure; however, there is a mistake that I've seen made more than once which I'd like to warn you about, to wit:

Do not use for your force book one that has a highly identifiable character. (I am thinking of an experience I had of being handed a book which was supposedly a Gothic novel set in the seventeenth century, and upon opening it as instructed coming across the name of James Bond. Since to my knowledge James Bond has never figured in any time-travel stories, my suspicions were somewhat aroused.)

If for some reason you have to use a specific book with a notable character—as for example any of the several tests involving Matt Helm books devised by Al Mann¹⁰—then use for your covers other titles from the Matt Helm series, since while Helm's name will appear, the villains are not strongly identifiable. Note that this won't work, for example, with the Bond series, since the villains he faces are usually quite specific.

A couple of problems related to actual performance:

The first one has to do with lights.

If, in doing these tests, you bring people on stage, as you will probably do in organization or college performances, you have no problem—there's plenty of illumination.

However, if you are working in a place where only the stage is lit, such as a nightclub, and you will be working with seated spectators, you may have a problem in that it will simply be too dark for the spectators to read the words.

There are a few ways around this...

⁹See Annemann's BOOK WITHOUT A NAME, page 46.

¹⁰See SENSATIONAL MENTALISM, PART FOUR, edited by Micky Hades, pages 7 through 10; or Mann's OF WORDS AND WIZARDS, page 15.

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...it has been suggested that for these situations you carry a flashlight; I frankly think that looks a little funny, as though you're an usher or something; and besides there is always the spectator who will hypothesize that you have a TV camera hidden inside the flashlight...

...the preferable course to take is to research the place *before* the show, find a table which is either in the light or can be moved into it, and use whatever people are seated at that table.

Another course of action is to instruct the lighting man to leave the spot on that table. Of course that means that—since a number of nightclubs have only one pin-spot—you'll be in darkness; tell the lighting man to compensate by bringing up the regular stage lights, and cheat back into them as much as possible.

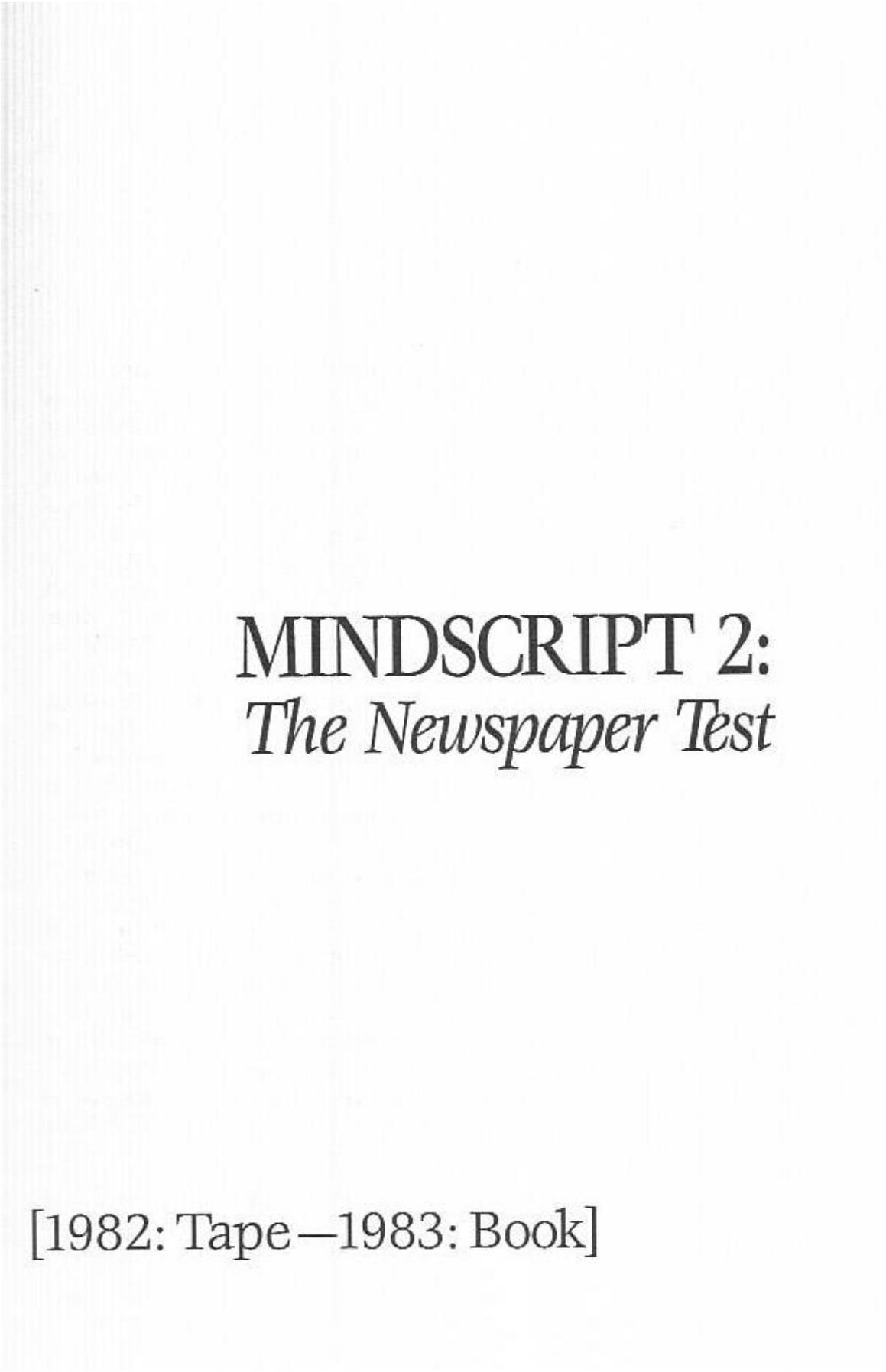
The other point is to pick for these tests a person who is *wearing* glasses; this way you know the person needs glasses and *has them on*. If you pick someone *not* wearing glasses, they may need them and have to fish around for them, causing a stage wait. Use judgment; don't pick someone with really thick glasses, who may have difficulty reading at all.

If you've learned all this, you're *still* not Chan Canasta; neither am I; but you do have the techniques here for what are—given proper presentation—some reasonably convincing book tests.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

Booka—page 54
Pointalism—page 274
Tarotate—page 277
Shelfish—page 288
Albertest—page 443
Tranceplant—page 625
Pentab—page 647
Pyrotica—page 711
Zodiaccount—page 737
Pagency—page 741
PyraTarot—page 778



MINDSCRIPT 2: *The Newspaper Test*

[1982: Tape—1983: Book]

THE NEWSPAPER TEST that we're going to discuss in this section is in many ways an outgrowth of the 'want-ad' tests that were popular in the 1920's. About 1930, in his TWENTY MAGICAL NOVELTIES, Edward Bagshawe described an effect called *A Newspaper Miracle*¹; later in the 30's, Robert Nelson advertised in his catalog an effect called *Tele-Thought*. As it had probably been inspired by the Bagshawe effect, so were many later effects based on the Nelson routine.

In the 1940's, a notable routine was that of Maurice Fogel, titled *Headline Hunter*; first marketed by Unique Studios, it was later published in *The Gen*². Also, in Willane's METHODS FOR MIRACLES series, Peter Warlock described his routine for this effect³; inspired by the Bagshawe and Fogel routines, it was called *A Glimpse Into The Future*.

Others who have written about the effect include Fred Lowe, Edmund Rowland and Robert Harbin; Al Koran's approach to the Rowland method was published in KORAN'S LEGACY by Hugh Miller⁴.

Before discussing the various approaches and methods, it might be well to ask: Is the effect worth it? Is it a good effect?

First—for those who may be unfamiliar with it—let me give a description of the basic effect:

A prediction has been made by the mentalist on a large slate or blackboard. A newspaper page is selected and torn into small pieces; one of these pieces is selected and the first line of print is read out by a spectator. The prediction is revealed; of course it matches the line just announced by the spectator.

In fact this effect has been used by *many* of the top mentalists—in most cases as a closing test. In addition to the people mentioned earlier, it has been used by Dunninger, David Berglas and Max Maven.

While not presuming to place myself in the same category as those I've just mentioned, I will say that I used this effect for many years—as a closer, usually—and in the right situations it will draw gasps; it is a *very* strong effect.

¹Page 45.

²Vol. 26, No. 3; Sept.-Oct.-Nov. 1970; page 123.

³No. 5; page 3.

⁴Page 53.

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Very few effects, in fact, can follow it.

As I have indicated elsewhere, prediction effects are among the most difficult to sell as genuine, simply because they seem so impossible that in many cases they are summarily dismissed as tricks.

However—this effect, for some reason, seems to get through to an audience. The procedure seems so fair, so clear-cut, that if it works at all, it appears like a miracle.

Of course you have a secondary problem created by this, which is that if you are going to use it, then by the time you get to it in your show you had better have convinced your audience that you are indeed the sort of person who *can* produce miracles.

As indicated above, the prediction in this routine is generally made on a large blackboard; it is therefore not switched, and that in turn means that the information to be predicted must be forced.

That being the case, let us now consider methods:

In the history of this effect there have been two general approaches to the force:

The first uses duplicate pieces; these are added to, or switched in for, the torn pieces of the newspaper page, and the selection is made from among these duplicates.

The other approach involves preselecting a particular area of the newspaper in use and then, in the course of tearing up the sheet of newspaper, positioning this particular piece so that it will fall at a previously called-out number.

Examples of the first version are the routines of Warlock and Fogel; of the second, Rowland and the later variant by Koran.

Each of these approaches has its advantages and disadvantages; in the version where you use duplicate pieces, the advantage is that you have a very straightforward and fair-seeming selection procedure. The disadvantages are the necessity for obtaining the duplicate pieces and the problems of getting them into play.

In the second version, where the piece is positioned at a particular number—the disadvantage is that the number is called out *before* you tear up the sheet of paper (or fold and cut it, as we'll later discuss); thus the procedure might sometimes appear to be less than straightforward. On the other hand, you do not have the problem of obtaining the duplicate pieces; also, as you will learn, this version can be done completely impromptu.

The major purpose of this section is to try to extend the advantages of each course of action—and eliminate or minimize the disadvantages.

Also, of course, I want to give you what I think are the best and simplest handlings for the various approaches.

DUPPLICTESTS

Of all the versions I have mentioned thus far, the most sophisticated was, not surprisingly, that of Peter Warlock.

In Warlock's routine a prediction had been made on a slate—and his force procedure involved loading not one but two banks of duplicate pieces. Of these two banks, one set of pieces had printing on both sides; the other set had printing only on one side, the other side being white space from a display ad or an unrecognizable section of photograph.

The spectator freely—or so she thought—chose two pieces; in fact she received the two force pieces. She was then instructed by the performer to choose *either side of either piece* and from that piece to read out the first legible line of print. Actually, of course, she had three choices, not four; the rest of the audience was unaware of this.

The slate bearing the prediction had two flaps, the outer one of which had a small square cutout that could be covered by the thumb.

Because of this small cutout section, the slate could be picked up with both flaps—one flap—or no flaps; predictions matching the force pieces had been written on the two outer flap surfaces and that of the slate, and thus any of these predictions could be revealed.

Fogel's approach to this problem was somewhat simpler. He used a bank of seven duplicate pieces (with printing on only one side).

In his presentation he wrote a prediction on a chalkboard and leaned it against something on display. He then had a page chosen from a newspaper, very rapidly tore it into a number of very small pieces and apparently divided them in half, taking

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a half in each hand. In fact he had obtained the stack of duplicate pieces from a simple bobby-pin clip under the edge of his coat; in pretending to divide the original pieces into two groups, he took all of these in one hand and the duplicates in the other. He would then tell a spectator to point to one hand *'for elimination'*. Whichever hand was pointed to, he would drop the indifferent pieces to the floor and retain the force pieces.

These pieces were screwed up into little balls; the spectator chose one, opened it and read it out, and the prediction on the chalkboard was revealed to bring the effect to a conclusion.



In doing this effect, for quite some time I kept to Fogel's general approach. I used only four duplicate pieces, for two reasons: first, I was unable to discern any difference in the effectiveness of the test with the lesser number of pieces. The other reason was that I began by folding up the paper and cutting it; following this procedure, I think most spectators would realize that if the pieces were divided in half there would be an *even* number in each hand.

Later on I developed an alternative handling which I will now describe:

The first thing I should do is indicate the size of the pieces involved. If you take a standard U.S. newspaper sheet and fold it in half and cut it *six times* you will end up with a stack of pieces which are about an inch and a half by three inches in size.

I had a four-inch square of cardboard in my right jacket pocket; on the upper edge of this card was a paper clip, and stuck under the paper clip on the outer side of the card were eight duplicate force pieces, of the size indicated.

In performance:

I made a prediction on a slate or large card. Then a page was selected from any one of several newspapers; this page was very quickly folded in half six times, alternating directions of the folds, to end with a small square packet.

The four sides of this square were trimmed away with scissors; this left a packet of sixty-four pieces of the right size.

I held the stack of pieces in my left hand. Having selected the spectator who would make this final choice, I explained to him that I was going to take the pieces one at a time from my left hand with my right, and place them in my right jacket pocket. As I did this, he was to call out *stop* at any point while I was holding a piece in my right hand; that would, of course, be the selected piece.

As I was explaining this I was suiting the action to the word—taking a piece in my right hand from my left, and placing it in the right jacket pocket. I repeated this with a second piece as I continued speaking; as I placed this piece in my pocket I obtained the stack of duplicates, holding them in a very simple fingerpalm.

MINDSCRIPT 2: THE NEWSPAPER TEST

My right hand left the right jacket pocket, returned to the left hand and deposited the stack of duplicate pieces on top of those already there; and in the same motion took off the top piece.

This was, of course, the first of the force pieces.

By this time I had finished my explanation and was into the action of the effect; at any point during this piece or the next seven pieces the spectator could stop me and would, of course, get a force piece.

Now in all the times I did this it never happened that the spectator went beyond eight pieces. If he had, I would simply have fingerpalmed the last of the force pieces as I put it in my pocket, and then done a straight finger-switch for whatever piece he finally chose.

This was of course not the preferable procedure, but it would have passed muster had the occasion come up—and it is always best to plan what one will do in such circumstances *beforehand*.

If the pieces are taken one by one in a methodical way while you gaze patiently at your spectator, eight force pieces will almost certainly outlast him.

The spectator having ended up with a force piece, he would then at my direction read out the first line of print from either side; actually, of course, as previously described there was only one side of the piece he could choose, the other side being a photo or display ad.

The prediction was then revealed.

As you can see, there is very little that can go wrong here; there is only one move in the entire routine (if it can even be called that).



There are, to be sure, many other ways of bringing the duplicate pieces into play. One method I used—which I think you will find amusing—was employed when I used the procedure of folding the newspaper and slitting it, rather than folding and trimming with scissors as mentioned earlier.

In doing this slitting of the paper I was using a letter opener...

...you will realize that what I was actually using here was a Sackville Billet Knife; this particular model is sometimes known as the German Billet Knife, and in this one the load comes out of the edge of the blade (rather than the tip as with the Jaks model).

Rather than having a prediction in the knife, I had a stack of duplicate pieces; the stack had been folded over once and this folded edge was inserted first so that it rested against the interior lever. In the action of cutting it was a very simple matter to add the duplicate pieces to the stock.

If you use smaller pieces—and with slight changes in handling—this can be done with the Jaks Letter Opener.



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As I've said, there are many other ways of bringing duplicate pieces into play; one I have used which involved somewhat larger pieces follows:

In this case instead of making six folds and cuts of the newspaper, you make only five—and therefore the pieces you end up with are approximately three by six inches in size.

The prediction is made on a large showcard or posterboard about twenty inches square. The card is actually two cards glued together, but left open along what will be the upper edge to form a pocket.

What I usually did was to use a section cut from an envelope to form the pocket between the two pieces of card. Into this pocket went the stack of duplicate pieces.

The side of the pocket on which the prediction would be written had a small thumb notch; the upper edge of the pieces could be pressed by the thumb through this notch.

With the showcard thus prepared, I could use it as a kind of *Bank Night* (aka *Just Chance*) tray. In other words—I'd write the prediction on one side of the showcard; since this was the side with the notch the spectator would have no opportunity to see it. I'd then have the spectator choose a newspaper and cut it up into pieces of the proper size.

The showcard was held prediction side down and the spectator deposited the pieces on it. I positioned them so they were directly over the pocket—and as I drew them away to hold them up or to hand them to a spectator for a moment, the force pieces were drawn out of the pocket and added under the visible stack.

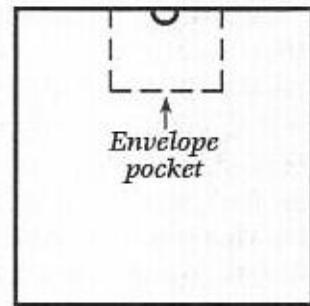
The prediction showcard was put up on an easel—back to the audience, of course—the pieces were reclaimed from the spectator if necessary, and the stack was turned over to bring the force pieces to the top. The force was then executed.

This phase could take various forms—I could screw a few pieces into balls as per the Fogel version; I could start putting them in my pocket as in the procedure outlined earlier; etc.

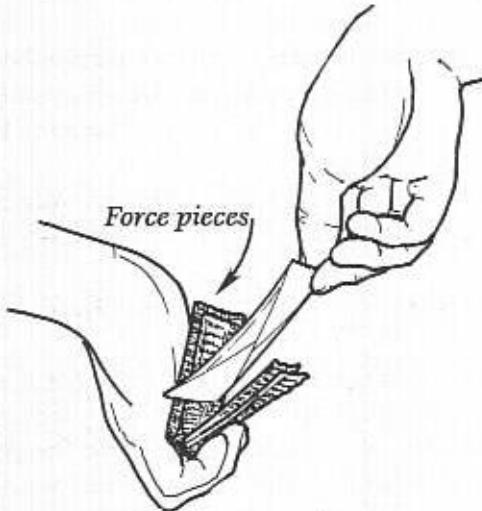
In any case, a piece was chosen and the first line of print read out. I took the showcard from the easel and turned it around to show my prediction to be correct—fingers or thumb concealing the small cutout at the top of the board.



I have used at times an even simpler procedure which does not involve a gaffed showcard. In this your prediction is written as large as possible on a sheet of paper which will fit in a letter-size envelope. This envelope is in your pocket with the force pieces behind it.



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Having chosen the page, the spectator cuts it into small pieces; as she does so you take out the envelope with the force pieces concealed behind it. You take her pieces from her and place them in front of the envelope in your hand. You say that you want her to hold the envelope—you lift it away from your hand and of course the two stacks of papers are automatically combined. You have only to let the stack fall forward and now the force pieces are on top; you can then conclude the effect as previously described.

As you will appreciate, this is a *very* simple technique; it is also very deceptive and effective.



Related to this general approach is that in which you use only *one* force piece, which is switched in for a freely selected piece.

Here, of course, we get into the general area of billet techniques, and when we're talking about switching billets, we've got a huge range of possibilities.

C.L. Boarde's *MAINLY MENTAL: VOL. ONE* is filled with such techniques.

In addition to many sleight-of-hand switches available, there are those using, for example, thumb-tips, as in the Al Baker method—which you will find on page 14 of ANNEMANN'S *PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS*—and that used in Annemann's *Diabolo Pellet Reading*, which is the first item in his *MENTAL BARGAIN EFFECTS*.

Using this latter technique, you'd have a small pay envelope with the force piece in the bottom of it; at the mouth of the envelope you have a thumb-tip, mouth up.

The freely selected piece is placed apparently into the envelope, actually into the tip which is stolen away as the envelope is sealed.

I should mention here that, if you use an approach of this sort, it is somewhat more logical to have your prediction revealed first, and then have the envelope torn open and the piece removed and read out. It doesn't seem to make sense to seal up an envelope and then immediately *unseal* it. By having the prediction read first, you lend some air of logic to the proceedings—if only a spurious one.

A better way to use this is to have the selection done very early on in the program; at some later point a card is chosen (rough-and-smooth pack) and also sealed in an envelope; further still a coin is chosen and dropped

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into an envelope (flapless envelope switch). In doing this neither card nor coin is looked at.

To end the show you point to your prediction showcard, which has been continuously on display. You have the three people come up with their sealed envelopes, pointing out that even they do not know the date on the coin, the name of the card or the words on the piece of paper.

The envelopes are opened and the contents identified and announced to the unruly mob...and then you turn the card around and reveal your predictions.

It remains only to collect the money from your dream-book concession and be on your way....

I should, however, point out here that it is usually better to have the spectator read out the force piece first, so that everyone knows what your prediction has to read in order to be correct, *before* you turn around the prediction so that the whole audience can simultaneously realize that you *are*, in fact, correct.



Yet another approach to the switch—which involves a very nice little angle on the handling of the prediction—utilizes my hatpin switch which you will find described on page 248.

This uses a hatpin about three and a half inches long. Your force piece is rolled into a small ball and impaled on the pin about two-thirds of the way toward the head. A small cork is put on the point, and the whole assemblage is put in your left jacket pocket.

In the general procedure of the effect—a prediction having been made and left on display, a number of pieces are torn from a newspaper and rolled into small balls.

One of these small balls is chosen; a spectator impales it on the pin and it is switched using the *Pinance* technique. This leaves the spectator holding the pin, with switched ball impaled and cork in place.

Now here's where we bring in the odd little angle I mentioned. At this point you say, "I'm not sure if I have succeeded with my prophecy—but I want to try a little something more." You take out a pad of paper, scribble a few words, tear off the sheet and drop it on the table. The spectator now removes the cork, takes the paper from the pin and unrolls it, then reads the first line of print. Your original prediction is opened and you are, of course, correct...

...at this point everyone is wondering (we hope) what's on the piece of paper you just wrote. You ask the spectator holding the little piece of newsprint to look at it carefully and call out the words that *have been pierced by the pin*. She does so. The crumpled piece of paper is now opened by anyone and checked; those are, in fact, the words you have just scribbled down.

If you check page 248 you will find within the description of *Pinance* the procedure for determining the words pierced by the pin.

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Done this way you have a nice little kicker to the usual routine.

You will appreciate that, using just this aspect, this can be used as a test of precognition as well as one of clairvoyance—you would just make the one prediction regarding the piercing.



There are any number of apparatus items that can be used in conjunction with this general type of effect.

In addition to the billet knife mentioned earlier, another item that immediately springs to mind is what is sometimes called the **Clear Change Bag** (also marketed as the **Visible Prediction Bag**). This is a clear plastic bag which looks ordinary but has two or three compartments in it.

The way this might be used would be to have the two outer sections filled with indifferent pieces, the inner section with force pieces. To make this convincing you would need a fairly large number of force pieces.

At the beginning of the routine you single out one particular spectator, and say you're going to make a prediction of something that will involve her specifically. You make a prediction on a slate or large card, detailing the force information.

You now have half a dozen or so people choose pieces out of the bag; of course they get indifferent pieces. The last selection is made by the lady for whom you wrote the prediction, and she gets a force piece.

Very quickly you point to the other spectators involved, and have each in turn read out the first line of print from the piece each chose. Finally your subject reads out the first line of print from her piece—you turn around your prediction and take your bow.

(NOTE 1993: In many parts of the U.S. newspapers are delivered to subscribers in flat plastic bags. It could look very natural to remove the newspaper from the bag, have a sheet of paper selected, and then apparently have the happy inspiration to use the plastic bag for the ensuing procedure.)

The procedure I've outlined here is in fact the quickest way of establishing that all the pieces in the bag are different. This could be used with a regular changing bag; I do not recommend it at all, however, as I don't think it would look as fair.

To get around this—you might consider taking another sheet of newspaper, and gluing to one-quarter of it another sheet, and thus make a pocket—much like a Devil's Handkerchief made out of paper. In this pocket you put the force pieces.

After another page has been torn up in performance, to give you a stack of pieces, you take out the sheet with the secret pocket, apparently at random, fold it into quarters and have the pieces dropped in. You follow the procedure as previously indicated. The advantage of this method is that it looks so off-hand, as though you decided to do it this way on the spur of the moment.

X-POSITIONS

Soon we will be discussing the Edmund Rowland approach to this effect—but before we do that I would like to point out a curious fact:

When the Rowland version of the newspaper test was originally published in Peter Warlock's *Pentagram*⁵, it did not seem to attract a great deal of attention here in the U.S. That original version was one in which you would rip the paper in half, rip it in half again in the opposite direction, etc. (Later Rowland devised the method of first folding the sheet and then trimming the four edges.)

As it happens, the English newsprint of the time was different from the U.S. newsprint, in the sense that it did not have as perceptible a *grain*—in other words, you could take a sheet of English newspaper and tear it—*straight*—in either direction. However, as a trial will show, if you can tear U.S. newsprint straight in one direction, when you try to do it in the other direction (say side to side rather than top to bottom) you end up with a rather funny-looking rip that goes off at an angle.

I would imagine that many stateside readers, trying to follow the directions for the Rowland effect, found themselves running into trouble with the part of the procedure that shouldn't have been a problem at all.

To go into the general Rowland method:

The concept was this—if you selected from a given newspaper page a particular section that you wanted to force, and then in the course of tearing up the sheet placed other pieces either above or below it, you could of course bring it to any named number.

⁵Vol. 7, No. 2; Nov. 1952; page 11.

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Rowland used thirty-two pieces, folding and cutting six times; I feel that sixteen is quite sufficient and from now on we will discuss the effect using that number.

As mentioned before, in a later article Rowland showed how the paper could be *folded* to bring the piece into proper position after the four edges had been trimmed away.

Unfortunately, both versions were accompanied by charts which appeared a bit intimidating and made the effect seem more complicated than it actually was.

Later approaches to this have also involved cue-sheets—as in the writings of Al Mann⁶—and there have also been mnemonic approaches discussed such as Ray Grismer's Handy. Now, in fact, many performers have been scared off the effect by these charts and sheets, etc., thinking the effect is really too much trouble to perform.

Actually, if you can add single digits and remember a few very simple rules, you can do this not only with one particular section of the page but with *any* section of the page.

Consider, if you will, the following obvious facts:

If you have a sheet of newspaper and you fold it over once, you are folding over *one* thickness; when you fold it over the second time you are folding over *two* thicknesses; the third time, *four* thicknesses; and the fourth time, *eight* thicknesses.

(Each fold is made at right angles to the previous one, so that you are folding the page into a smaller and smaller square.)

This sequence of one-two-four-eight is common sense.

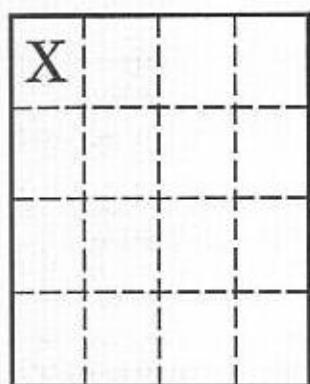
Now let us assume, for purposes of illustration, that the section you want to force is in the upper left corner. Follow along with a sheet of newspaper in hand.

First, fold the sheet of newspaper four times (each fold being at right angles to the previous fold) and then unfold it; you will see that you now have a pattern of sixteen squares, four by four. Make an X on the square in the upper left corner.

For purposes of description we will consider the side of the page with the X on it to be the *upper* side.

Let's assume you are holding the newspaper sheet so that it hangs vertically in front of you between your hands; you can see the X in the upper left corner, near your left hand.

Your first fold will be to fold the bottom half of the page against the top half, creating a horizontal fold. Obviously, you can fold it in one of two ways—toward



⁶See *The News Force* in Mann's SIX COLUMNS, page 10.

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yourself and up, so that it covers the half with the X'd section—or away and behind, so that it does not cover the X'd piece.

The same is true of the succeeding folds, which can either go over the X'd section or under it; the second fold is vertical, the third horizontal and the fourth vertical.

As you will recall, you have four numbers of thicknesses to work with: one, two, four and eight. One or more of these numbers in combination can bring your force section to any position.

Here's how we go about it:

Let's say, for example, that you have to bring your force piece to the *ninth* position, that being the number called out by the spectator. What that means, clearly enough, is that you have to put *eight* pieces *on top of it*. You know that your *fourth* fold has eight thicknesses all by itself. What this means is that in folding up the page, the first, second and third folds go *under* (or, from your point of view, *behind*) the X'd section; the fourth fold, eight thicknesses, goes *on top of it*.

Therefore, when you trim away the edges of the packet with the scissors to transform it into a stack of loose pieces, the X'd piece will be in the ninth position.

Let's take another example—here the number called out is *twelve*.

This means that eleven pieces must be put on top of the X'd piece. Now, of the four numbers you have to work with—one, two, four and eight—we see immediately that one, two and eight will total eleven. This means that when you are folding up the page, the first, second and fourth folds go on top; the third fold underneath.

One more example—this time the number is *six*.

Five pieces must be placed above it; of our one-two-four-eight possibilities, $1 + 4 = 5$, one and four being the first and third folds respectively. Therefore the first fold goes on top, second fold beneath, third fold on top and the fourth fold beneath. Five thicknesses have thus been added, and when the edges are trimmed away the force piece is in the sixth position.

Now that is really all there is to the technical procedure for this effect; that's all you have to know. After a couple of hours practice you will be able to do it without thinking—as, in fact, you should be able to do it before you perform it in public.

One thing I should again stress—you do *not* fold for the number called out by the spectator but for one number less, because what you are folding is the number of pieces that go on top of the force piece.



Earlier on I said that you could force any of the sixteen possible squares using this technique. Now that you see how really simple the procedure is, you can see how the technique can be employed with any square. As long as you have

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a clear visual picture of where that square is, you can (so to speak) fold the rest of the page *around* it. Again, just a bit of practice will show you how easily this can be accomplished.

What this means—once you have the procedure down cold—is that this is virtually an impromptu test. As long as you can pick up a newspaper page and find a heading that will fall cleanly within one of the sixteen possible squares (and it is fairly easy to visualize the squares on the unfolded page) you can make your prediction and proceed with the effect.

Here again you should pick if possible a page that has a large display ad on the opposite side so that there is only the one choice available on the torn piece. This is not crucial since you are handling the pieces of paper and you can simply hand the force piece to the spectator with the proper side up.

Note that I said above, "... *find a heading*". In this test you are not going to go for the first line of print, since it is for all practical purposes impossible to fold and cut with the necessary exactness; instead you look for a story-head printed in larger type, and it is this heading that you predict, instructing the spectator accordingly.

(Interestingly, Koran did not bother with this: on his force piece he had a *gummed sticker with the word written on it*. To cover this he would sometimes have the word SEX written on the sticker; when the spectator received the force piece he might smile, in part because he had been handed this piece with a big sticker on it. Koran would say, "You're smiling, sir—what's the word on the paper?" "Sex," the spectator would say. "Really?" Koran would reply. "Sex makes you laugh, does it?" He would then have the spectator turn over the piece of paper; another sticker on this side had the information to be predicted.)

(This certainly worked for Koran—but in effect it makes the spectator into an impromptu stooge, and if you're going to do that there's hardly any point in messing around with this selection procedure.)



If this effect has a weak point—it is that you ask for the number before you do the folding and cutting. You do not want to draw attention to this fact. The more quickly you can do the folding and cutting—not rushed but briskly and efficiently—the less noticeable it is likely to be.

It is of course absolutely fatal to the effect if you have to stop and think about which way to fold the paper.

It's possible to handle the number selection on the offbeat; for example, as you are tearing the page out of the newspaper, you turn to a spectator and request a number from one to sixteen; he gives one and you say, "Thank you; would you keep that number in mind?" You now proceed with the folding and cutting procedure. When this has been done you turn back to the spectator and say, "Now, you have a number in mind and that is... what?" He tells you again and now you count down to the force piece. For many spectators this

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will play as though you have heard the number for the first time only *now*; they won't recall that he called it out previously.

Koran's approach to this was to make the number selection itself part of the preliminary effect; the way he used it on the *Ed Sullivan Show* was as follows:

He asked Sullivan to name a number from one to sixteen; let's say that fourteen was the number that Sullivan called out. Koran tore up the sheet of paper he was holding and handed the pieces to Sullivan; he then pointed to a large white envelope which had been on view in his jacket pocket. Taking it out, he said, "*Your number was...fourteen?*" Sullivan said it was. "*Isn't that strange,*" said Koran. "*Would you look at the number that's been written on this envelope?*" Sullivan looked at it—of course it was the number fourteen. Koran then told Sullivan to count down to the fourteenth piece—Sullivan did and read out the words on the piece—and then opened the envelope to find a prediction for those very words.

The reaction of Ed Sullivan—who had been around show business for a long, long time—was "*That's the most amazing thing I've ever seen!*" Not a bad line to put on the brochure...

Again, while Koran could do this and make it play very strongly, in one way it didn't really make sense. By this I mean that if you by some means could know in advance what number a spectator would choose, then of course you'd know what piece of paper he'd end up with—in effect you were predicting the same thing twice.

I do realize that in some senses this is a theoretical objection—but in other senses it is not.

I've used a slightly different procedure as follows:

Again, an envelope was used to contain the prediction. A number was called out and the force was executed as usual. However, when the prediction was removed from the envelope, it read something along the lines of "*I predict that the piece at position fourteen will be chosen and that piece will read: [whatever].*"

The envelope was of the window variety and I used a nail-writer to fill in the number at the appropriate place. While, as in the previous case, this did not add anything to the effect, it did tend to obscure the method, in the sense that the prediction contained both a number which could not possibly have been known beforehand or forced, and a detailed description of the force words which could not have been secretly filled in. The two aspects of the method seemed to rule each other out; there is thus no 'heat' on the folding and cutting procedure.

The only drawback of this routine is that, because of the nature of the prediction, it can only be used in reasonably intimate circumstances—unlike earlier versions where you have a prediction that can be read by everyone.

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Now I'd like to talk about an idea of Fred Lowe's, and show how it can be usefully combined with the Rowland procedure:

In the *New Pentagram*⁷, Lowe described a procedure where you've torn the page into a number of small pieces, and your force piece is *third* from the bottom. A number is now called out; let's say it is *twelve*.

From the top you take pieces one-two-three-four-five; as you do this you are taking each piece in turn, holding it up, crumpling it and dropping it to the ground, in a kind of showy count. When you are performing this action with the *ninth* piece, you flip the stack in your other hand *over*.

Now you count ten-eleven-twelve—and the piece originally third from the bottom is the one you're holding as you count *twelve*. No matter what the number called, you simply do the turnover at a point three numbers earlier.

(If the spectator should in fact name *three*, you simply hand him the stack; in the action of doing this you turn it over. If *two*, you secretly turn over the stack, fairly move two pieces from top to bottom and then hand him the *next* piece. If *one*, you can move the top two pieces to the bottom as one and show the new top piece. These low numbers are, in fact, hardly ever called.)

To relate this to the Rowland methodology:

You spot your force piece as usual and make your prediction—then, *before* asking for a number, you do your folding and cutting in such a way as to bring the piece to the fourteenth position, which is to say, third from the bottom.

You are now set to have a spectator call out a number and—using Lowe's technique—show your force piece to be at the number named.

This allows you to alternate procedures—in other words, sometimes you have the number called out before you fold and cut, sometimes afterward; it doesn't appear to make any difference. Thus if you are in a performance situation where you are doing two or three shows a night, those people who see all the shows will become aware of this and thus will remain baffled.

Now it's not so important that this would include members of the audience who come back to see a second show; but it would also mean that you'd mystify members of the club staff and management.

The reason this is important is that—unlike a magician—you have to fool *everybody*. Theoretically hip though these staff people might be, they'd still like to believe in your mystical powers—and how well they treat you will be in direct relationship to how well you sell this idea.

Curious—but true.

(By the way—this does not mean you should play the mystic all the time; that can get rather insufferable.)

As a related comment, it is inadvisable in these situations to use effects where the force item is the same at every performance; if you do this—and

⁷Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1972; page 1.

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are doing several shows in the same place—by the end of the week you will hear members of the staff calling out the name of the chosen word or card or what-have-you before you've announced it; this might be a bit embarrassing.

Robert Harbin's approach to the newspaper test was typically unique; what he did was to take the technique of equivoque to its logical conclusion.

His concept—as described in *Abra*⁸ and the later collection of his work from that magazine, *HARBINCADABRA*⁹—was to spot the particular item on the page he wanted to use for his prediction, make the prediction on a large card or slate, and then hand the page to a spectator.

The spectator was instructed to tear the page in half, and give Harbin either of the two pieces. If they handed him the section which did *not* contain the force area, he crumpled up this piece and threw it away—and told the spectator to tear the piece he still held in half again.

If, however, Harbin was handed the half that *did* have the force area, he then took that piece to another spectator and told that person to tear it in half, and to hand Harbin either half—following the same procedure as before; if Harbin was handed the non-force section he discarded it and told the person to tear his piece again—if the force section was given to Harbin he took it to yet another spectator.

Harbin continued with this procedure until, finally, he was left with just the force piece, the heading of which was read aloud and then the prediction shown to match.

Now to bring off something like this successfully you have to be a performer of great skill, assurance, confidence and command—all qualities possessed by Robert Harbin.

(It should be pointed out that Harbin realized that at times this could go wrong—if the spectator happened to rip the force section in half, for example—and so he had a duplicate piece in his pocket; if necessary he could do a straight switch, exchanging this one for the one given to him by the spectator.)

Fred Lowe developed an interesting approach to this effect with his *Newstear Telepathy*, published in *The New Pentagram*¹⁰. In this test a sheet of paper was torn into sixteen pieces which were then distributed to several members of the audience. The performer then proceeded to divine what was on the various pieces.

To accomplish this Lowe tore up a duplicate sheet of paper, according to a standardized procedure; he noted the major text of each piece in turn on a small cue-list which was then clipped against his palm by means of a 'tongue' that went under his finger-ring.

⁸Vol. 7, No. 181; July 16, 1949; page 387.

⁹Page 90.

¹⁰Vol. 4, No. 1; March 1972; page 1.

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In performance—the other sheet of paper was torn up in exactly the same way as had been the first, so that, as Lowe distributed the pieces in order, he knew who got which piece.

He had only to consult his cue-list to make his divinations.¹¹

Taking this as a jumping-off point, I devised the following:

From my pocket I would extract two small envelopes; on one was a large letter A, on the other a B. I glanced at them, replaced the B envelope in my pocket and handed the A envelope to a spectator to hold. A newspaper sheet was selected—a number was chosen—the sheet was folded and cut—the number counted to—and the piece read out. The spectator holding the envelope marked A was instructed to open it, and the prediction within was of course correct.

Another sheet of newspaper was taken, folded up and the edges cut; this packet of pieces being handed to a spectator, another spectator was asked to call out a number (from one to sixteen, of course). As the spectator with the stack counted down to the number, I took envelope B from my pocket and handed it to someone to hold.

The chosen piece having been read out, the person with envelope B was told to open it and read out the prediction—which like the first was absolutely correct.

The procedure—as you've no doubt guessed—is that for prediction A the standard Rowland routine is followed.

Envelope B, originally taken out with A, contains a prediction for one of the sixteen possibilities from the second newspaper; it goes back into the pocket. Also in the pocket is an index with fifteen pockets; in each of these is an envelope marked B, and these envelopes contain the other fifteen possibilities for the second newspaper used.

As with the Lowe routine above, you've previously torn up a duplicate page according to a standardized procedure which delivers the pieces into an order matching the palmed cue-sheet. Thus when the number is called you can instantly reach in and extract the proper envelope.



Now we come to the most elaborate routine in this section; it is a combination of ideas from many sources (I will try to give credits as we proceed).

In concept it is a combination of the headline prediction with the newspaper prediction we have been discussing.

In this routine we use the duplicate-piece approach; the first bit of preparation is to get the eight duplicate force-pieces and note the first line.

The line that will be forced is written as large as possible on a sheet of white bond paper of standard size. On a sheet of blue bond paper we make

¹¹A related effect was Stanley Jaks' *Thoughts Out Of Print* which appeared in *Pentagram*, Vol. 7, No. 6; March 1953; page 48.

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another prediction—and this one is of a single word to be forced, using a Wordo-type device.

(I am sure that most readers will be familiar with Wordo—but on the off-chance that you haven't encountered it, I will briefly describe a popular version of the principle. It is a card [usually a business card] with a small window cut out of the center. At the back of the card a piece of newsprint has been hinged with Scotch™ tape so that it can be swung down into view through the window or folded back out of sight. With the piece folded back the card is slid up and down a sheet of newspaper; the spectators see the words sliding by beneath the window. As you pause to instruct a spectator to call stop at any point, the piece is swung down into position but this is covered by the fingers. The card is moved about on the page and stopped at the spectator's command; someone looks through the window and reads off the word, presumably on the newspaper but actually from the attached piece. Thus the force is executed.)

(Versions of this are available many places—Fred Petersen's approach appeared in the *Phoenix*¹²; Sam Schwartz has an excellent version in THE TARBELL COURSE IN MAGIC, VOL. 7¹³; there is an extensive description of the principle in MAINLY MENTAL: VOL. TWO¹⁴; and also there is Phil Goldstein's excellent Isolation which uses this concept as its basis.)

The white and blue bond sheets with the force information are folded together and placed in a business-size envelope. This envelope is addressed to the chairperson of the entertainment committee at the performance venue; you *type* this address for a reason which will become clear in a moment.

You fold two blank sheets of bond paper and place them together in another envelope; this envelope is closed and sealed—but unlike the first envelope, you do not use the glue on the flap; instead, you seal it with rubber cement. You now address this envelope *very lightly in pencil* to yourself. Put postage stamps on both envelopes (in exactly the same position), make a photocopy of the face of the envelope to be sent to the chairperson, and then mail both envelopes.

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You call the chairperson and state that you are sending a letter which you *do not want opened*. The chairperson is to bring it to the show, and at that time will verify to the audience that it has not been opened or tampered with in any way.

When you get the second envelope in the mail, you carefully erase the pencilled address. Now—using the photocopy as a guide—you type in the chairperson's name and address exactly as it appears on the envelope sent. (This is why I specify typing: for uniformity of appearance.)

¹²No. 221; Jan. 26, 1951; page 882.

¹³Page 357.

¹⁴Page 71.

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(NOTE 1993: If you use a computer with an envelope-addressing program, you simply run the envelope through your printer and have it print out the chairperson's address, which you prudently save to disk; later, after erasing your address, you simply run this envelope through the printer and print the same address again. You might wish to incorporate some odd spacing or unimportant typo in the address to sell the uniqueness of the envelope.)

You peel open the envelope and remove the rubber cement. You have nothing else to do until the day of the performance.

On the morning of the performance you note the headlines in the day's newspaper—the newspaper that you will be using in the newspaper test at the show. You write the major headline down on a sheet of blue bond paper; on a sheet of white bond, you write down the prediction information for your stack of force pieces.

You fold up the two sheets as you did with the first set, place them in the envelope and seal it—genuinely, this time, with the glue from the flap.¹⁵

This envelope is now placed in one side of a Himber-type Flipover Wallet—if you have one large enough—or in the rear compartment of a somewhat larger double-compartment manila envelope.

All preliminaries are over, save one:

That one occurs when you arrive at the performance venue. What will usually happen is that the person to whom you sent the envelope will come up to you and ask you what is supposed to be done with it.

When this happens you take out, for example, your Flipover Wallet—open it (to the empty side!)—and have the chairperson place the envelope in the pocket. *"I don't want to touch the envelope,"* you say, making a point of this. The chairperson closes the wallet and you now run a strip of white adhesive tape completely around it. The wallet is thus taped closed and it can't be tampered with; you tell the chairperson to hang onto it until you call for it.

If you're using the double envelope—you have the chairperson place their envelope inside the larger one—it is clear that it is otherwise empty—you seal the envelope closed and hand it to the chairperson for safekeeping.

(Note: if you're unhappy about the spectator holding a gaffed item all through the show, you shouldn't be. You tell the person that you will ask him or her to swear that the envelope has not been tampered with in any way; this means, of course, that the *spectator* can't tamper with it.)

(However, you may if you wish execute the exchange by means of a flapless envelope switch. This entails having a stack of envelopes and does not seem quite as natural in appearance, but I mention it for those who may wish to use it.)

The idea of switching a headline prediction envelope in a larger envelope is Walter Gibson's; the Himber Wallet idea is Gene Nielsen's¹⁶—and I should

¹⁵This rubber-cement on the envelope-flap angle is, I believe, Sid Lorraine's.

¹⁶Magick, No. 131; July 11, 1975; page 651.

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explain here that on stage you simply cut open the tape on *the proper side*; thus, with Nielsen's concept, the spectator *can't* open it the wrong way.

At the point in the show where you're going to do this routine, you point out the chairperson, who is invited to come up on stage; you make no mention at this point of the prediction. You simply say that the chairperson has a part in what comes next and you will explain in a moment.

Another spectator is invited up; with that spectator you go through the newspaper test procedure and she ends up with one of your force pieces.

At this point you reveal that you sent a prediction to the other person on stage some days—or weeks—earlier. The chairperson has possessed the prediction ever since then, and is asked to verify this; and that it has not been tampered with; and that you have never touched it.

At this point wallet or envelope is opened as necessary and the prediction envelope is dumped out; this is, of course, your switched-in envelope.

You tell the chairperson to open the envelope for the first time and remove the two sheets of paper inside. As this is being done you turn to the other spectator and have her read out the first line of print on her chosen piece of paper; this she does.

The chairperson is asked to read out the prediction on the white sheet. Of course it matches. Applause; the other assisting spectator is thanked and returns to her seat.

Now you pick up the newspaper that has been used in the test; you point out that it is today's paper and you read out the major headline, showing this to the audience. Again mentioning that the predictions were sent some time earlier, you now have the chairperson read out the contents of the blue sheet...

...and thus the effect concludes.

The reason that you prepared the envelope that the chairperson actually received is that it may happen that they do not—or cannot—locate you before the show. A secondary possibility is that they do find you—but when the envelope is brought out you note that it has become marked (intentionally or otherwise) in a manner that precludes a switch.

402 In such cases—during the show you verify that the chairperson is in fact in the audience; at the proper point you get them up on the stage; and then execute the torn-pieces force with one page, the Wordo force with another. The predictions are opened and found to be correct.

Thus the spectators are perfectly satisfied that you have seen into the future—and never know that they might have seen a headline prediction.

You might wish to incorporate the Warlock angle, which uses three options, mentioned at the beginning of this section; with this, the switched in envelope would be a three-way type, each compartment having a white sheet with one of the three options, and a blue sheet with the same headline

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prediction. The envelope could be Annemann's¹⁷ or George Sanderson's¹⁸. If you use this, you might after the show cut open the switched-out envelope (ordinary) to match the one opened in the show, extract the contents and leave the envelope around.

A closing thought: in any of these tests, the prediction should be as large as possible, so that the whole audience can read it (where the procedure permits). The whole point of this effect is that when you reveal your prediction everyone, at the same time, knows you're right; that's what gets the gasps, that's what gets the reaction—and that's what makes this effect worth doing.

These effects have served me well; I hope they'll do the same for you.

¹⁷ ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 137.

¹⁸ See his PRICELESS MAGIC, page 37.

MINDSCRIPT 3: *The Symbol Test*

[1982: Tape—1983: Book]

THE SUBJECT OF this section is the divination of symbols—but we won't confine ourselves here to working with just the five standard ESP symbols of *circle*, *cross*, *square*, *wavy lines* and *star*.

Instead, in the effects to follow, we'll be working with sets of designs from sixteen in number to twenty, thirty and forty or more different designs.

This section will be divided into two basic parts. The first part will describe effects using decks of symbol cards. The second part will be devoted to effects using charts on which are a number of different symbols.

Before we get into the effects, I'd like to make a brief observation involving ESP cards. There are, within the mentalism literature and on the market, a number of ESP card divinations or predictions in which you discern or prophesy one of the five possible symbols; I have, in fact, come up with a couple of these myself.

However, I should point out that while the methods may be fascinating to us—from a layperson's point of view, if you do just the one test, you'd be right one out of five times *by chance alone*. The odds simply are not impressive enough to create any sort of effect.

If you're doing an effect where you match five out of five symbols, such as in Hen Fetsch's *Symbologic* for example, or Corinda's *Khan Slate Test*, or Tripp and Nelson's *Phenomenal ESP Perception*, that's something else again—but simply guessing one of five possibilities is not much of an effect at all from the spectator's point of view.

Therefore, if you are going to do one-out-of-five divinations with ESP cards, you'll have to select a methodology for it that will allow you to do it again and again and again, so that the spectators will be satisfied that you are not depending on the vagaries of chance alone.

I should point out that while, if you ask a layperson, you'll find that this is how such effects are judged, there *are* exceptions to this. If, for example, you're doing Alan Cracknell's *Russian Roulette*¹, or one of its many later variations, and stand to get your head blown off if you're wrong, most spectators will accept it as a legitimate test. It doesn't seem reasonable that you'd be willing to gamble on that sort of thing simply to amuse them.

¹See Nelson's SENSATIONAL MENTALISM, PART 1, page 44.

SYMBOL CARDS

PAIRITY

Our first effect involves a deck of forty-two different symbols; you spread the deck face to the audience so they can see all the different designs. You then give the deck several genuine riffle shuffles.

Handing the deck to a spectator, you tell him to give it a straight cut; and another; and another. As he is doing this, you turn your back. He cuts the deck twice more, completing the cuts, and then deals the top card to another spectator and takes the next card for himself. He places the remainder of the deck in his pocket out of sight.

(I should point out here—in the interest of making things clear—that at this point you do not know what symbols have been selected.)

The two spectators now go to a blackboard on which two large squares have been chalked, and each draws his or her design in one of the squares. During all of this your back remains turned; you may even be blindfolded.

In fact, you know both designs...

...how do you know? Is it telepathy—or chicanery?

Well, it's chicanery, I'm afraid, and it is brought about by means of a deck prepared as I will now describe.

This deck—which may be neatly made up from a blank-face pack—actually consists of twenty-one *pairs* of cards; the upper card of each pair is trimmed slightly short. Obviously, then, any given pair of cards will stay together through any number of neat riffle shuffles.

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Take a look at the following chart:

SHORT-LONG CARD COMBINATIONS					
1-1	1-2	1-3	1-4	1-5	1-6
2-2	2-3	2-4	2-5	2-6	
3-3	3-4	3-5	3-6		
4-4	4-5	4-6			
5-5	5-6				
6-6					

What these numbers symbolize is the *number of lines it takes to draw the designs on each pair of cards*. (See page 427 for a sampling of suitable designs.)

For example:

The first pair listed, as you see, is 1-1; this means, of course, that both designs are drawn with a single line. The upper one of the pair, on the short card, might be a *circle*; the lower one, on the long card, a *straight line*.

The last pair listed—6-6—might consist of a *six-point star* for the design on the upper card, a *square with interior cross* for the design on the lower card.

As you will note on looking over the chart, each of the twenty-one pairs of numbers is unique. Now what that means is that if, as each spectator draws his design, you hear first *two* lines and then *four* lines, it can only be those cards comprising the 2-4 pair, none other.

That, in short, is how you do it—by a combination of the principle of sound-reading with a deck prepared as indicated. The two spectators draw their designs and you simply count the numbers of lines taken to draw each design. (In doing this, either spectator can draw first, since it really doesn't matter if you hear it as, say 3-5 or 5-3.)

You can simply memorize the combinations—or you can prepare a cue-list which has each of the possible number-combinations and next to them the relevant symbols. This cue list could be on an index card in your breast pocket; since your back is turned to the spectators, there's no problem in sneaking a peek at the list.

That's really all there is to it. As you can see, although the effect is strong and has reasonably strict conditions—two designs freely chosen by two spectators, you never see any of the designs—the method is really rather simple; it is a practical effect.

A technical point:

Do follow the procedure as outlined on having the spectator holding the deck give a card to the other spectator before taking one for himself. The reason for this? In giving the other spectator her card, the man holding the deck will *deal* it to her; however, in taking his own card, he's likely just to *pick* it off the top of the deck. We're using short-long pairs here—so if he did that picking action first he'd be very likely to pick off two cards as one. Though he would

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shortly discover this—by that time he might have given the top card of an entirely different pair to the other spectator. With the procedure as given, the other spectator gets the top, short, card—the person with the deck now has a long card on top of the deck with a short card below it, so it is almost impossible that he could now take two cards as one.

Those of you who may possess Phil Goldstein's *Mind's Eye* deck² will see how, with a little bit of thought and rearrangement, it is possible to apply the principle here described to that deck.

You may encounter some difficulty in coming up with what you consider acceptable different designs using just one or two lines—but there is no rule that you have to use *all* the possible combinations; even just a dozen pairs would give you a quite impressive range of twenty-four possible designs.

NOTES

I'd like to make some comments about sound-reading:

Many of the effects you will learn in this section will involve this technique, one which hasn't been used very much. It *has* been talked about quite a bit. Annemann had it as a method in a Living-and-Dead Test³, as did Archie Byford⁴; C.L. Boarde wrote about it in *Chalk Clairvoyance*⁵; Tony Corinda discusses it in his *THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM*⁶; Sam Dalal has written a book about it.⁷

I think one reason the technique has been little-used is that, quite often, it's been applied to the idea of reading the five ESP symbols (the circle draws with one line, the cross with two, etc.) and many mentalists fear that, done this way, the method would be obvious.

True: with such a limited range of choices it *is* obvious.

However—in the effects described herein we will be using twenty-five, thirty, or as in the effect just described forty-two designs. Also, those few spectators who even consider the possibility of sound-reading will note that several of the designs draw with the same number of lines—so they will discard it as a possible method. What we do, of course, is to use the technique of sound-reading in combination with other methods.

One other point regarding the previous effect:

The two squares on the chalkboard in which the spectators record their designs are drawn as large as possible. The reason for this is, as you tell your assisting spectators, so they can draw their designs large enough for

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²See his *GREEN BOOK OF MENTALISM*, page 22.

³*Dead Men Tell No Tales!* in SH-H-H—! IT'S A SECRET, page 47.

⁴See his marketed item titled *Dead And Living Test*.

⁵*The Linking Ring*, Vol. 28, No. 10; Dec. 1948; page 77.

⁶Page 38.

⁷SOUND MENTALISM.

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everyone to see. This is the putative and logical reason because, after all, if the symbol cards were large enough, why would there be any need to draw the designs at all?

The *actual* reason is that, the larger the designs are drawn, the easier it is to count the number of lines.

GRAYVEN

Our second effect can be done in a number of ways, all built around the same basic principle.

I will describe one way—give you the general method—and then go into the other approaches.

Here you use a deck of thirty-two design cards; all the designs are, of course, different.

You mix them; you hand them to a spectator; and, as in the first effect, have him cut them several times. You turn your back and he gives the deck one more cut. He then hands the top card to one spectator; the second card to another; the third to another; the fourth to yet another; and he takes the fifth card for himself. He puts the remainder of the deck in his pocket.

Now, as before, each spectator in turn goes to the blackboard and draws his or her design. When this has been done you may proceed with the divination, as you now know *all five symbols*.

Here, again, a new application of sound reading is used.

The deck, as indicated above, consists of thirty-two cards, each with a different symbol on it—but these symbols can be divided into two classes.

Sixteen of the designs are drawn with *two or three lines*.

Sixteen of the designs are drawn with *five or six lines*.

Let us say that a design drawn with two or three lines will be symbolized by the number 1; a design with five or six lines by the number 0.

Another chart for you to look at:

GRAY CODE

1-1-0-0-1-1-0-1-0-1-1-0-0-0-1-0-1-0-0-1-0-0-0-1-1-1-1-0-1

This string of 1's and 0's represents the stack arrangement of a deck of cards such as we've been discussing. This is an

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endless chain, or cyclic arrangement; the last numbers lead right into the first ones, much like a Si Stebbins playing card stack.

The property of the gray code which we exploit is that any *five* of these 1's and 0's in sequence form a *unique* pattern. Thus, if you hear 0-0-0-1-0, that only appears in one part of the stack. Similarly, 1-1-1-0-1, the last five digits in the row, as a pattern will be found nowhere else in the stack.

Now, as I've mentioned, this gray code symbolizes a stack, with the 1's equalling two- or three-line designs, the 0's equalling five- or six-line designs. Therefore, taking the stack as here set out, the first design would be one of two or three lines, as would the second design; the third and fourth cards would have five- or six-line designs; the fifth and sixth cards, two- or three-line designs; the seventh, a five- or six-line design; the eighth, a two- or three-line design—etc.

As you will have deduced by now, the deck is given a false shuffle. I generally use for this purpose a Charlier shuffle which you will find in print many places.

It is therefore clear that no matter where the spectator cuts the deck, if he deals out four cards in sequence to four spectators and takes the fifth himself, you have a particular and unique sequence. Then, when the spectators go to the board, each in turn (in the same order as the cards were handed out), and draw their designs, you only have to differentiate them as to the number of lines, thus equaling 1 or 0.

That done, you have your pattern and thus know where in the stack they are.

Your cue-list would reproduce the 1 and 0 pattern as given above, and beneath each of these digits would be an appropriate design, duplicating the arrangement of the cards in the deck.

The only critical point of this effect is that the spectators must go to the board in the same sequence as the cards were distributed—i.e., the first spectator receiving a card is the first one to go to the board and draw his design.

Matters are simplified here if you have the five spectators seated in a row of chairs on stage, but it can be done if they are seated in one particular row in the audience. I suggest that you get the *names* of the five people who are going to take part. The reason for this is that it is much better to say, "All right, Joe, go to the board and draw your design. Have you done that? Thanks, Joe, now please put your card in your pocket and return to your seat. Isabelle, would you go to the board...?" and so on, than to say, "...the spectator in the first seat, the spectator in the second seat..." etc. That latter version has a rather mechanical sound that you want to avoid.

If you have trouble remembering the spectators' names, study Harry Lorayne's REMEMBERING PEOPLE.

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This also means that earlier on, when you are working just with the spectator holding the deck, you can instruct him to "... give the first card to Joe... give the next one to Isabelle..."—and again this sounds much better than "... deal the cards out from left to right to each of the four spectators in turn."

You know that the operations have to be done in a particular way—but that doesn't mean you have to let the *audience* know.

GRAYDATION

Now that we have the basic principle, let's go on to the second version:

In this version we retain the sixteen symbol cards which equal 1—but the other sixteen cards are replaced with a new set of sixteen, which bears words of the English language.

The selection procedure is handled exactly as it was in the first version: false shuffle, spectator gets deck and cuts, gives four spectators one card each, takes fifth card, rest of deck into pocket—right?

However, here no blackboard is involved. Instead we handle it this way:

As before, your back is turned to the spectators; you tell them to note what's on their cards.

You now say that you find *words* easier to receive than *designs*; you'll try to get the words first.

You tell those spectators who are holding word cards to concentrate on them; to hold them against their foreheads. You have them do this for a few moments while you frown appropriately, and then you say, "Yes...yes, I believe I'm getting the impression...yes, I think I've got it...fine. You can stop concentrating and put your hands down."

They do so; you now turn around and explain that you'd like to have those spectators holding designs do exactly as the other spectators did—concentrate on their designs as they hold the cards to their foreheads, but not to do this until you have turned your back again.

The spectators do as instructed—and with your back still turned, you divine the words and symbols.

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Well, as you will understand from the previous gray-code effect—if you know who has a word card and who has a symbol card, you have your pattern of 1's and 0's.

The way you find this out—as you have probably guessed—is that when you turn around, you look at both hands of each spectator in turn. If both hands are the same color, that spectator did *not* hold a card to his forehead; if, however, there is a noticeable difference in shade, the paler hand was held up to the forehead. If, therefore, you note that the first and third spectators each have one hand paler than the other, you know that your pattern for the five spectators is 0-1-0-1-1.

(Do not, as is sometimes recommended in applications of this pale-arm principle, simply compare each spectator's arms with the others; variations in skin tone render this a chancy procedure.)

Obviously, you could divine the cards right away; however, in the interests of dramatic logic, you turn your back again and have the other spectators concentrate on their cards as described. Also, of course, it looks better if you divine the cards with your back still turned.

As before, you have the option of memorizing the stack or of using a cue-list.

(There are so many ways of concealing a cue-list—in addition to the aforementioned index card in the breast pocket—that it is not really a problem. You can have it second sheet down in a pad; on the gimmick-section of an Add-A-Number pad; on the flap of a slate; on a matchbook cover; inside a cigarette case; and so on. This should present no difficulty at all to the experienced performer.)

GRAYCE

In the two variations I will now describe, there is a presentational difference, in that here you work with only one spectator.

This can be done with an all-symbol deck or a symbol-word deck as you choose.

Here what happens is that the spectator cuts the deck several times (after your false shuffle)—you walk well away from her—and she deals out a row of five cards onto a table, face down. She can look at any card and you immediately know what it is—because, of course, you know what all five cards are.

Again the question is: how do you get the pattern?

For this I will assume that you are using a standard playing-card back, blank-face stock as earlier suggested. You take the sixteen cards which will symbolize 1, and you spray the backs of this set with artists' matte fixative; this is available in aerosol cans in any art supply store.

If you do this correctly, you will produce this interesting phenomenon: if you have a lamp next to the table, and the spectator deals out the five cards—with the light shining directly down on the cards, the spectator will not be able to note any difference.

If, however, you are some distance away, and thus are looking at the backs of the cards at an extreme angle, you will be able to see the difference; the light will reflect from them differently.

(For this reason I should point out that, when you are preparing the cards—don't keep spraying the card until, looking straight down on it, you can tell the difference between it and an unsprayed card. Spray it a little—walk across the room and check it from there.)

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([I might subparenthetically point out that this is also a useful way to prepare ey-cards, particularly for deal-and-stop effects.])

In any case...

...by whether the back of each card appears dull or shiny, from your vantage point, you will be able to give it a value of 1 or 0, and thus read the pattern. This reading can be done from distances as far away as twenty-five to thirty feet.

One way to handle the effect is to have your back turned and slightly turn so you say, *"Have you dealt out the cards yet?"*—during which you get your look.

If you're going to have the spectator choose one of the five cards dealt, you start out facing her—tell her to put her finger on any card—and then turn your back. Since you know the arrangement as soon as you check your cue-list, and since you saw which one of the five cards was touched, you know its identity. This angle of having a spectator touch a card before turning your back is Ed Marlo's.⁸

⁸See THE CARDICIAN, page 128.

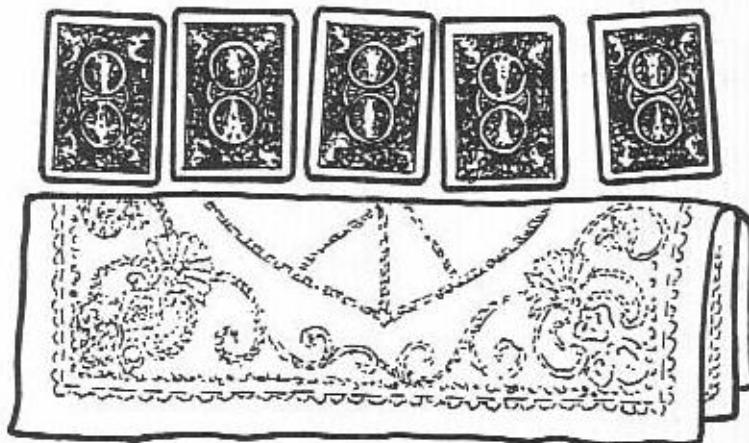
GRAYZE

In our fourth version...

...you sit at a card table with the spectator. You have a pocket-handkerchief handy; it is fifteen inches square, and has been folded twice in the same direction to form a band three-and-three-quarters inches by fifteen inches.

You mix the cards—with your very best Charlier or other false shuffle!—and hand the cards to the spectator; he cuts the deck several times, as you turn your back.

You tell him to deal out five cards in a row from left to right, and then cover them with the folded handkerchief; the cards are dealt face down, of course. He is then to put the rest of the cards in his pocket.



You turn around and point out that you have not seen the face or back of *any* card; that there is no conceivable way you could know the identities of the five cards lying beneath the several thicknesses of handkerchief.

Yet—you divine all five of them.

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Again the question is: how do you get the pattern?

For this we use an idea of Bob Hummer's. The sixteen cards with values of 1 are prepared by having their backs treated with roughing fluid. The other sixteen cards are without preparation.

Hummer's principle—which he used in a marketed effect called The Magic Carpet⁹—is this: If you touch a card through a handkerchief (or other suitable cloth) and the card's back is not roughed, the handkerchief will slide over the card if you exert a bit of lateral pressure. If, however, the card's back is roughed, then *the card will move along with the handkerchief*.

It is a very noticeable difference, easily felt.

Now, in folding the handkerchief as indicated, and instructing the spectator to deal out the cards and then cover them with the handkerchief, you have controlled him into dealing the cards into a row of very specific size. This means that, while you will not be able to see the cards, you will be able to touch each one of them in turn, as you will know its approximate location.

What you do, then, is to stress the impossibility of the test; as you talk about how "...no one could know what these five cards are..." your hand lightly touches them through the handkerchief, in a tapping fashion. In doing this tapping you exert a slight forward pressure. The cards that are roughed will move with the handkerchief; the cards that are not roughed will stay where they are and the handkerchief will slide over them.

Thus do you get your pattern. You surreptitiously consult your cue-list... and make your divinations.

(Note: in some cases a roughed deck as just described may be used for the prior test instead of the matte-spray deck, since the roughed finish is duller than the standard finish. Exercise some judgment however—the difference may be *too* noticeable.)

Regarding what you've just read, there are two points I'd like to make—one philosophical, the other technical:

Philosophical:

Those of you who have read this far are aware of the fact that I am not, generally speaking, in the habit of tooting my own horn (in my writing, at least!), telling you how wonderful are my creations. I don't because I assume you will make that decision for yourself...!

However... I would like to semi-humbly point out that the effect I have just described is by any reasonable standards fairly strong; from the spectators' point of view you divine five cards which you *never* see until *after* you have completely concluded the divinations. It's an effect that will fool any layman, and most magicians and mentalists.

Let's keep it that way.

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⁹See Karl Fulves' compilation, BOB HUMMER'S COLLECTED SECRETS, page 25.

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If you are the only one around who can do this stuff—you're special. If you teach it to your friend Bill, so that he can do it too, you are now only half as special...

...as I've said elsewhere, mentalism is *supposed* to be special, it is supposed to be miraculous. A miracle that a lot of people can do is no miracle at all.

Please understand: I do not say this so I can sell more books—I don't care if you never tell anyone the source of the material you're using. I *would* like it to remain—as I said—special.

I'd also like to point out that it is far too easy, these days, for people to obtain information about magic and mentalism simply to satisfy idle curiosity. The fact that they may belong to a magic club, or a mental group, *doesn't mean a damned thing*. If they are performers and want performance material, they will go to the effort of obtaining it themselves. If they're not performers, they don't deserve to have it—unless their curiosity is so overwhelming that they are willing to go to the necessary trouble. If that's the case, make them work for it.

Don't hand people information on a silver platter.

End of lecture.

Technical:

The technical point mentioned is an application of mnemonic technique to the gray code.

I have mentioned earlier that it is possible to memorize these sequences; here's an approach to doing that.

As you undoubtedly know, the gray code we have been using is an aspect of what's called the *binary* system of numbering. With this system, any number can be expressed by a combination of 1's and 0's, depending on their relative position.

16 8 4 2 1

The principle, simply put, is that if a 1 appears at a particular position, you add the value of that position as indicated above; if a 0, the value of that position is not added.

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If, for example, you wanted to indicate the number 3, the binary number symbolizing it would be 0-0-0-1-1. You do not wish to add the 16, 8 or 4 values, so their position is indicated with 0; $2 + 1 = 3$, so you put a 1 in the positions equaling 2 and 1.

Likewise, the number 20 in binary would be 1-0-1-0-0, since you would wish to add only the first and third positions, the 16 and 4 respectively.

It therefore follows that if you have a binary pattern at your disposal, such as we have been using in the preceding effects, you can translate this into a *number*.

If you are familiar with mnemonic technique, you can then change this number into a picture which can be associated with a design or word that

MINDSCRIPT 3: THE SYMBOL TEST

begins that sequence of five designs in the stack. It is thus possible to do any of these routines by memory without any need for a cue-list. This sounds a lot more complicated than it is; once the basic mnemonic keys have been developed, in performance it becomes automatic.

(I will point out that, while I have done these tests by the mnemonic means described—I've always had a cue-list handy in the event my brain might suddenly go bad on me.)

For these effects the deck must always contain the full thirty-two cards of the stack; it's in the nature of the gray code. For those of you who would like to use playing cards in this effect, note that the French *pique* deck consists of exactly thirty-two cards.

TRISONIC

Our last effect using cards takes a somewhat different approach; here a deck of twenty-seven cards is used, in the following manner:

Three spectators are involved. Having mixed the cards you hand them to the first spectator; she cuts the pack several times and then deals it into three piles.

The second spectator chooses any of these three piles; the other two piles are discarded. Spectator Two cuts the packet he holds any number of times and then deals this packet into three smaller piles.

The third spectator chooses any of these three piles; as before, the other two piles are discarded. The pile held by Spectator Three will consist of three cards; she retains one and gives one each to the other two spectators.

The three spectators go to a blackboard—in any order—and draw their designs.

You, some distance away and with your back turned, divine the three chosen designs.

Here's the chart:

TRISONIC (<i>after Elmsley</i>)		
1-1-1	2-2-3	2-2-2
1-3-3	3-3-3	2-3-3
1-1-2	1-2-2	1-1-3

The above nine sets of three digits each represent design cards in groups, the cards being drawn with one, two or three lines—as for example a circle, a cross and a triangle.

As in the first test described in this section, each set of values is unique—thus if you hear first two lines, then perhaps a single line, and then two lines, you know it can only be the 1-2-2 set

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(as mentioned, the order in which the designs are drawn clearly does not matter).

To prepare, you make up a deck with the designs having the proper number of lines as indicated, and stack them as above; note that the order of the nine sets does not matter, but the cards *within* each set must stay together at this point.

Once this stack has been done, you now deal the cards into three piles left to right and then gather the piles left to right. The deck is now stacked for performance and your preparation is complete.

Strange as it may seem, if the procedure as given earlier for the selection of the three cards is followed, the three spectators will always end up with the three cards of *one particular set!* This concept and stack is Alex Elmsley's; he used it in an effect called *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral* which appeared in the *New Pentagram*¹⁰.

Here we combine Elmsley's principle with sound-reading; you have only to count the number of lines taken to draw the three designs—this gives you your three digits and thus, consulting your cue-list, what the designs are.

(Not to complicate matters—but [as mentioned regarding the first effect in this section] you may find it a bit difficult to come up with the requisite number of designs that will be satisfactory using only one, two or three lines. Of course, you only need to be able to differentiate between the three classes of design, so they can just as well be drawn with two, four and six lines—or three, six and nine lines.)

(NOTE 1993: Subsequent to the original publication of this routine Phil Goldstein came up with another approach to the Elmsley concept that might have application here; you'll find it on page 9 of his *THEQUAL*, published in 1984.)

One other point:

Though this is an extremely baffling effect, I don't think it is appropriate for certain types of shows—nightclubs, for example, where you have a fairly brisk tempo of performance. In lecture-demonstrations, and shows for organizations and clubs, it will work wonders.



A final thought, regarding symbol-card decks:

Many performers avoid such decks, feeling that they don't have the latitude, the range of effects, available with playing cards. In fact a number of symbol decks have been devised where each design was a direct analog of a playing card—Tot O'Regan described such a deck in *Mental-Wise*¹¹, Bob Wagner had one in *MAGIC DUNGEON MENTALISM*¹², and Phil Goldstein's was described

¹⁰Vol. 5, No. 5; July 1973; page 33.

¹¹Vol. 3, No. 10; June 1957; page 1.

¹²Page 57.

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in his GREEN BOOK OF MENTALISM¹³. With any of these decks you can stack them, put them in indexes, etc., just as you would with regular playing cards.

I bring all this up as preface to an idea I came up with over twenty years ago, which was to use the mnemonic picture equivalents for playing cards—HaT for Ace of Hearts; HeN for Two of Hearts, etc.—as a picture deck. From a layperson's point of view it was a random assortment of drawings—but I could do nearly anything that could be done with a regular pack of playing cards. Several lists of these 'picture-equivalents' are available in books on mnemonics by Roth, Lorayne, Zufall and other sources.

(NOTE 1993: Since the original publication of this *MINDSCRIPT* in 1982 this notion—like many others in this collection—has appeared elsewhere without credit. How surprised am I?)

SYMBOL CHARTS

Now we come to the second part of this section—effects accomplished with the use of symbol charts.

The first test I'll call:

PAIRCEPTION

Here you show a chart of twenty-five designs—five rows of five designs each—the chart is no larger than about fifteen inches square.

○	~~~	★	+	□
III	□/\\	□+□	★	C
S	λ	T	=	K
V	◊	#	◎	◇
△	Z	X	W	Δ

You hand this chart to the assisting spectator; he makes a mental selection of any one of the twenty-five different designs

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and, once you have turned your back, draws it on a chalkboard. Now—to make things a bit more difficult—you ask him to look at the design on *either side* of the one he has selected (i.e., either to left or right). He is to draw that design as well on the chalkboard. Of course, if he has chosen a design at the extreme end of a row, he only has the one adjacent design to use.

Both designs having been drawn on the chalkboard, you—still with back turned, or genuinely blindfolded—make your divination.

We use the two principles we've used previously—unique combinations and sound-reading.

Another chart:

PAIRCEPTION LINE COUNT				
1	3	5	2	4
5	5	6	6	1
1	1	2	2	3
2	6	4	1	5
3	3	4	4	5

Each of the digits, as you hardly need me telling you by now, indicates the number of lines needed to draw the design in that position. The designs I use are shown in the chart on the previous page.

As you will note, the number of lines taken to draw any side-by-side pair is a unique combination—so that if you hear:

stroke-stroke-stroke-stroke-stroke

—followed by—

stroke-stroke-stroke-stroke-stroke

—you know the two designs are drawn with five lines each, and thus can only be the two designs that begin the second row: the *Roman numeral III* and the *square with the interior diagonal line*.

Another example: you hear *three strokes, then two*—which can only be the last two designs in the third row: the *letter K* and the *equals sign*.

That's all there is to the method. Regarding presentation: when you're instructing the spectator, use the phrasing "*the design to left or right*" or "*the design on either side*." Don't say, "... *the design next to it*," because the spectator might conceivably construe this to mean the design above or below.

In preparing your chart the horizontal lines should be much heavier than the vertical ones to indicate five *rows* of designs, rather than a five-by-five square.

Alternatively—rather than using a single chart, you might use five *strips*, each containing the five designs of a row; the spectator mixes the strips, chooses one and selects from it a design. The effect continues as usual. This approach avoids the problem of the spectator selecting designs from two different rows on the chart, in spite of your instructions.

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One other point, useful in a number of these effects:

The spectator is at the blackboard and you instruct her to draw her design. She does so and you note the number of lines; then, after a pause, you apparently continue your instructions with "... and tell me when you've done that."

The spectator responds that she has already done it...but your question sells to the rest of the audience the idea that you didn't know (couldn't tell) that the design had been drawn.

Obviously you won't use this bit when it's very quiet or the audience is very near, for the spectators would *know* that you must have heard the sound of the writing.

A patter possibility—somewhat more elaborate than just the "to make it more difficult" line mentioned earlier to justify the two choices—might be that of choice and chance: the spectator has a free choice as to one of the designs, and the other one is whichever by chance happens to be next to it.

As an alternative you can have a husband and wife or two sweethearts (not necessarily mutually exclusive pairs) come up: one draws the first design, the other draws the adjacent design—and you may even get a bit of fun out of which of the two gets the free choice.

Our next item with a chart is called...

CHARTRUSE

The effect as perceived by the spectators is this:

You have a large chart, folded once each way. You unfold and the audience notes that it contains a total of sixteen different designs, four in each of the four sections. (Each section a fifteen-inch square card; the four cards are hinged together with cloth tape.)

A spectator is asked to take part and he makes a mental selection of any one of the sixteen designs. You have him concentrate on the design, make a mental image of it... yet try to receive it, and don't seem to be able to... you have him concentrate just a bit more...

...and you name the *mentally selected* design.

That, as I've said, is how it appears to the spectators; the exact description is that you show the chart—he looks at his design, you fold up the chart—you try to get an impression and fail, you unfold the chart and have him look at his design once more—you fold the chart up again—and you name the thought of design.

What actually happens is this: the second time the spectator looks at the chart, he is really looking at a different chart with another arrangement of the designs.

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FIRST ARRANGEMENT

1	2	5	6
3	4	7	8
9	10	13	14
11	12	15	16

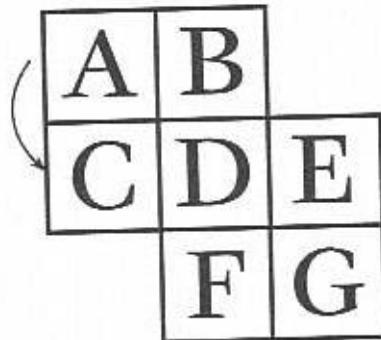
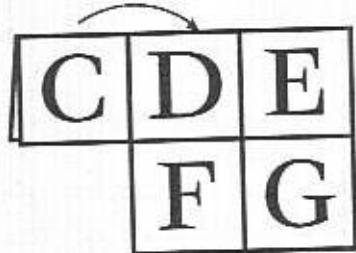
SECOND ARRANGEMENT

1	9	14	6
5	13	10	2
15	7	4	12
11	3	8	16

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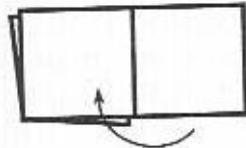
The chart is actually made something like the old Buddha money papers; make a mockup, take a square piece of card and divide it into a three-by-three square—cut off the squares at upper right and lower left and letter the squares as shown here.

Now fold the AB section back
behind the CD section.



Then fold the visible C section *behind* D.

Now fold the FG section
forward and *up*.



Then fold the outer section containing
the EG squares in against the D.

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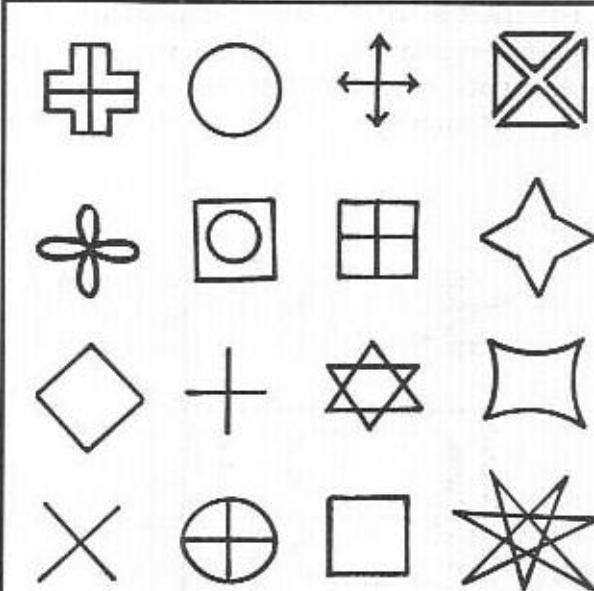
This will be the configuration of the chart in its folded state; as you can see, it can be opened very fairly to show either of two four-fold sections—the DEFG, or the other sides of ABCD.

As described earlier, the full-size chart is composed of seven fifteen-inch squares, put together as per our mockup, held together with wide bands of cloth tape. (You only need seven because both sides of the central square are used.) This tape must also be used to border all outer edges of the chart and these borders should be half the width of the interior bands.

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Some of the designs you might use are shown in the illustration at the right. Other designs can be used if you don't care for these but they should have the property of looking the same no matter which way they're turned.

You assign a number to each of the sixteen designs; having taped the seven squares together, you now fill in the two charts as per the two patterns on page 430—four designs to a square. Example: in the first arrangement Design 4 is in the lower right corner of the upper left-hand square; in the second arrangement *that same design* is in the upper left position of the lower right-hand square.



This particular system of rearrangement has a purpose, which is to retain the *relative* positioning of any given design—which is to say, if the spectator noted that it was at an outer corner of the chart, when he sees it again—on the other chart—it will *still* be at an outer corner. The concept here is that—since the chart has no clearly marked top or bottom—when the spectator spots his design again, wherever it happens to be, he will simply think that you have inadvertently turned the chart ninety degrees or a hundred and eighty degrees—he will *not* realize that the chart has been completely rearranged. For this reason it is essential that you keep to the pattern redistribution indicated.

In performance:

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You show the folded chart and unfold it to show the first arrangement. Having selected a spectator to take part, you stand about seven feet away from him and hold the chart up so that it is to one side of your head, sort of resting on your shoulder. You ask him to decide on a design and to fix his concentration on it. Looking at his eyes, you will be able to tell which quarter of the chart he's looking at.

(This is the reason for the wide cloth hinges, to give the four sets of four designs as wide a separation as possible.)

Let's say that you determine that he's looking at the upper right-hand square, i.e., the one containing Designs 5, 6, 7 and 8. You fold up the chart—let the hand holding the chart drop to your side—and ask the spectator to concentrate further.

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He does so—and as previously described, you seem to run into difficulty—so you bring up the chart and have him look at his design again. This time, of course, you unfold the chart to show the *second* arrangement; the corner bearing Designs 1, 5, 9 and 13 is at the upper left.

Let us presume that this time he is looking at the lower right-hand square, which in this chart has Designs 4, 8, 12 and 16. There is only one design common to the two squares he's looked at—and that is Design 8.

Thus you are now able to make the divination.

Again let me point out that you hold up the chart beside your head, much like a TV model pitching a product; this position is the best for determining which of the squares the spectator is looking at. Also, both times you hold the chart with the No. 1 design in the upper left corner.

Another example: the spectator first looks at the lower left-hand square—and on the second chart he's looking in the same place. The design in this case can only be No. 11.

The chart as I've described it is the design I believe to be the best. You can, however, do this with something along the lines of a folding game-board, with an extra flap. (If you use this it must be a board that folds into quarters; a single-fold board would give the second display an altered appearance in reference to the central fold.)

In an early version of this I had the chart mounted in a large frame. Chart No. 2 was permanently mounted in the frame, and Chart No. 1 was on a flap that dropped out when the frame was placed face down on the table for a moment; the handling was identical to that for getting rid of a flap in a slate-writing routine. You have a logical reason for setting the frame down in that you think you're finished with it; when you can't discern the design you have to pick it up again—minus the flap. If you use this approach, do remember that—unlike a slate—the frame must be *square*, to avoid any orientation cues.

If you use the chart first described, however—when you're holding it for the spectator to look at, the section behind which the other three sections are hidden should be at a slight angle to the audience so that there's no chance they will note the extra edges.

It is, of course, essential to get the spectator to stare at the design. To condition him to do this—say that you have to have a mental link with him; tell him to stare for a few moments into your eyes, or at a spot you indicate on your forehead, before you begin.

If, as could happen, you find he can't fix his gaze—simply say that you don't sense a mental link with him and you'll have to try someone else.

Another approach is to do a preliminary effect in which you make the same request of a few spectators ("Look at the crystal...") and see who follows your instruction.

You will find, in performing this, that spectators attach no importance whatever to the opening of the chart the second time; if they notice it at all,

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and they usually don't, they will regard it as either a logical reality or a presentational nicety—they won't connect it at all with the method.

If you wish to employ mnemonics here, instead of a cue-list, the application is rather straightforward: think of the four large squares as 1-2-3-4 left to right, top to bottom.

An example might be that the spectator looks the first time at the upper left, the second time at the lower right, which gives us 1-4.

The mnemonic for this might be TiRe—and if your Design 4 (the one thought of) is, say, a circle, the association between *tire* and *circle* is an obvious one. In choosing the designs for your chart you can create them to associate specifically with their mnemonic values.

Let's say the spectator chooses Design 6, which appears in Square 2 on both charts. Your mnemonic is 2-2, which translates as NuN. If Design 6 is a cross, again it's an obvious linkup.

With only sixteen designs, memorization is hardly a problem in any case.

Otherwise, of course, you can always have the two digits indicating the squares looked at, and the design they indicate, on a cue-list.

CREDITS

This effect was inspired by one invented by Tom Sellers.¹⁴ In the Sellers effect two name charts were used openly.

¹⁴Silent Thought Reading, which first appeared in *The Gen*, Vol. 11, No. 2; June 1955; page 52—and later in his BEST SELLERS, page 94.

ON THE COLOR-COUNTING FRAME

The color-counting frame is the forcing device, variously credited to Stanley Collins and Ernest Noakes, in which you have a four-by-four-square chart. A force color is in Squares 1, 6, 8 and 14 (left to right, top to bottom).

Any number from one to sixteen can be called out and, depending on which edge of the chart is up, you can reach one of the four force squares.

The problem with this device is that the force information has to appear four times. Solutions to this have involved words which were anagrams, the use of four-way outs—and those of you who have read *Framedown*, back on page 37, will recall my use of a single out involving four apparently different designs.

My thought here, however, is to eliminate one of the four force squares: in the illustration on the next page, only the three X'd squares are needed. The numbers along each border are those that will reach a force square with that edge at the top.

This is accomplished very fairly by counting either left to right, then top to bottom OR top to bottom, then left to right. To take the numbers at the top in our illustration as examples: 4, 10 and 15 are counted to by going from top to bottom. The procedure appears completely straightforward.

With only *three* force squares to deal with, you can have sixteen different designs on the chart and cover the possibilities with one three-way envelope.¹⁵

¹⁵Either that in ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 137, or Sanderson's in his PRICELESS MAGIC, page 37.

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Another thought on the frame:

Many of you who use it do so in conjunction with an idea of Rupert Gilbert's called *Precognition*¹⁶.

Gilbert's concept was to have the opposite side of the counting frame arranged as a dartboard; the spectator would choose a number, naturally, by throwing a dart. Gilbert's lovely notion was that, in turning the board to bring the number to the top so it could be read, you brought it into the right position to be turned directly around for the counting.

If you use this, try the following:

Your prediction is in an envelope. This envelope is in reality a double envelope; in one compartment is the color or design to be forced by the color-counting frame—in the other is a prediction of any number from one to sixteen.

What will happen, fifteen-sixteenths of the time, is that the spectator will throw the dart into another number than the one you have predicted. In these cases you turn the board around, go through the usual count and procedure, and open the correct compartment of the envelope to reveal your color or design prediction.

However...

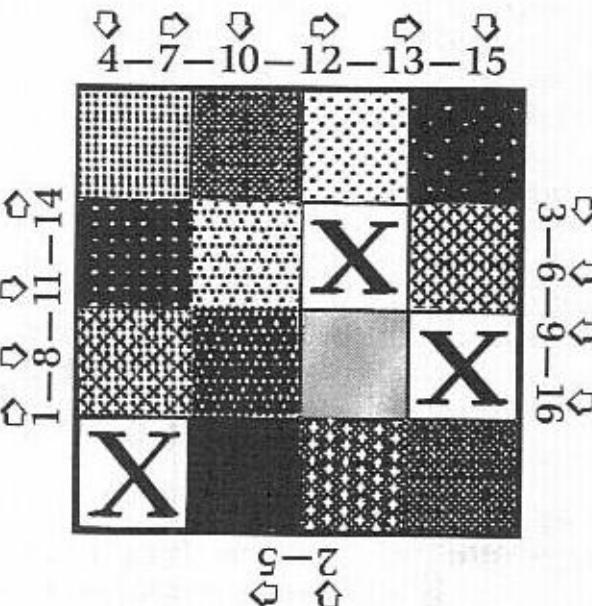
... every sixteenth time or so, the spectator will throw the dart into the number matched by your prediction in the other compartment of the envelope. When that happens you take out that prediction, hand it to him to read...

... and he reads your correct prediction of his selection of a number by a *freely thrown dart*.

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Here, of course, you make no mention whatever of the color-count frame on the other side of the board.

Doing the effect this way involves hardly any more work than the usual routine—and every so often it gives you a miracle.



¹⁶Which appeared first in *The Gen*, Vol. 7, No. 1; May 1951; page 10—and then later in *MAGIC OF THE MIND*, page 86.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

Framedown—page 37

Handbook—page 496

Symbol—page 713

MAGAZINE
MISCELLANEA

AS AN INTERLUDE from the chronological order in which these sections have been appearing, here are some items which have been published in magazines and elsewhere over the years.

Most of the following items have appeared in *Magick*, *New Invocation* and *Genii*. Two effects originally appeared in Burt Sperber's collection MIRACLES OF MY FRIENDS. The final item is previously unpublished.

HELLAPHONE

(*New Invocation*, No. 31; February 1986)

EFFECT

You show an old upright telephone and explain that it once belonged to a Dr. Praetorius, an occultist and mage of the 1930's. You give the phone to a spectator, who may look it over; its bottom is long since gone, so the spectator can see inside and note that it has no innards, electronic or otherwise.

Handing the spectator a small book, you tell her that this was Praetorius' address book—and she may note its age partly from its condition and partly from the fact that the phone numbers are all two-letter exchanges and *four* digits, rather than the seven-digit numbers now used.

You step well away and have the spectator decide on anyone in the address book and dial the number. After a pause you say, "*I don't think you'll be able to reach Madam Vargas...*"—who is, of course, the person the spectator has dialed.

METHOD

The phone is perfectly ordinary, and may be obtained at any antique or junk shop; the magic you use to learn the identity of the person called is not black or white but gray—a gray code, to be exact, in combination with sound-reading.

Both principles have been around for a long time; the first time they were combined, to my knowledge, was in my *Grayven* (page 413). Here we have a new application of these combined techniques.

The secret lies in the phone numbers, and how the sound of dialing may be translated into a code that identifies the person called. To do this, we consider the first three numbers on the dial—1, 2 and 3—to have a value of 0; the last three digits on

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the dial—7, 8 and 9—to have a value of 1. You will find it very easy to differentiate between the sounds made by dialing numbers in the two sets. All that is necessary is to listen, and then secretly consult a cue-sheet which gives you the information.

Let's take Madam Vargas for an example: If the phone number you created for her was TRump 2931, you hear the spectator dial *long-long-short-long-short-short*, and you translate this into 1-1-0-1-0-0, remembering it as *eleven-oh-one hundred*; a quick peek at your cue-list to find the name listed against that code, and you have the name.

It should be noted that you can do this by memory, simply by translating the code into a two-digit octal number (where the first position has a value of 1, second position 2, and third position 4). With Madam Vargas' number:

1-1-0 1-0-0

translates into: 3 1

and 31 is associated by mnemonics with Madam Vargas, easily done since you create a name that *has the same mnemonic value* as its code number—here, of course, MaDam = 31.

None of this latter technique is required, of course, and is only mentioned for the benefit of those who may wish to do the feat by memory alone.

ALBERTEST

(*New Invocation*, No. 54; December 1989)

EFFECT

You show an old book on ritual magic, commenting that it seems to have a strange influence on people; it tends to guide their thoughts along certain lines.

"Let me illustrate this," you say, and write something on the topmost of a small packet of double-blank cards you hold. Turning the card over, you sign your name; you then lift the cover of the book and very fairly deposit the card beneath.

Now, gripping the book down further, you slowly riffle the pages and invite a spectator to call stop; he does so, and you have him name any word he sees on the chosen page. Smiling broadly, you write this word on the top card of the packet you still hold; turning it over, you ask for the spectator's name and, after you are finished writing, deposit this card beneath the cover, next to the first card. You hand the book to the spectator; as you do so you say that in the several times you have tried the experiment, without fail the same word has been decided on.

When the spectator checks the two cards, he finds the words are identical.

METHOD

It must be said at the outset that this is an adaptation of *Little Albert*, an effect of Karl Fulves.¹ I have simplified the handling, adding a Vernon subtlety and a presentational approach.

The only preparation is to write the spectator's name on the upper surface of the second card from the top of the packet; this signature should be confined to the right vertical half of the

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¹*Pallbearers Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1; Nov. 1966; page 59.

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card, presuming you are holding the cards in the left hand (thus, when in the course of the effect the top card is pushed slightly to the left the signature won't be seen).

Talking about the strange powers of the book, you apparently write something on the upper surface of the *top* card; this is only simulation, and the packet is tilted toward you slightly to conceal this. You turn the card over, keeping the packet tilted so the spectator's name won't be seen, and fairly write your name on the upper surface of the card.

Now you lift the cover of the book and apparently drop the card inside. What actually happens is that you push the card slightly off the packet (the signature on the card beneath being on the half not seen) and move the hand under the book cover; as you do this you simply flip the card over and back onto the packet so that its blank side shows. Since the spectators believe the card to have writing on both sides, the blank surface now showing is convincing proof that the card was placed under the cover.

The spectator fairly chooses a word, and you fairly write it on the upper surface of the top card; you now double lift and turn over the two cards as one, and asking the spectator his name you write the word a second time, tilting the packet again to obscure this action.

As you do this writing you don't say anything, but you smile and shake your head as if to say to yourself, *"Incredible—it worked again."* This is to sell the idea that the spectator has just named the word you expected, in accordance with the presentation.

It now only remains to deposit the two cards as one under the book cover. In doing this, when your hand is hidden by the book let the two cards separate and push off the upper one so it flips off your fingers and turns over as it drops. Then drop the other card squarely. In this way both cards will be four signed side up—a small but important point.

Impromptu version

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If you've not had time to prepare, you begin as usual by apparently writing a word on the top card of the packet. In fact you write the spectator's name, then you frown, mumbling something like "No, that wasn't the word..." at which point you deal a blank card from beneath it. (Since the cards are tilted toward you this requires no great skill.) This card is torn up and another card is taken from the bottom of the packet and casually placed on top as you talk. You are now set for the routine as usual.

²This angle is adapted from Dai Vernon's *Electromagnetic Aces* routine, published in *Arcane*, No. 9; Jan. 14, 1983; page 107.

Grand Bazaar

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It is important to imply in your presentation that the same word is *always* picked; this has some strange logic—the power of the book—and it also steers analytical spectators toward the blind alley of trying to figure out how the word might've been forced—which is, of course, not the case.

CREDITS

As noted in text.

IN2ITION

(Magick, No. 424; May 26, 1989)

EFFECT

You open a small business-card case; in one side, of course, are your business cards. The other side shows, through its clear window, a plain white card bearing the words *DESTINY CARD*.

From a deck of cards you have the querent select a card by a random cutting procedure. You hand her a pencil and ask her to write on the face of the card a word or phrase to represent the question she has in mind.

This done, you open the business-card case and slide the playing card under the white card already there, making it clear that you do not see the writing. "I always do a preliminary test to establish that we are truly en rapport," you say. "What was the identity of the card you chose?"

"The Two of Hearts," responds the querent. You remove the white card and hand it to her. When she turns it over she finds the message: *Your Destiny Card Is The Two Of Hearts*.

Putting away the business-card case, you smile and comment that it is clear your mind is linked with hers, thus you can proceed—and you do, using the cards to divine her question with considerable accuracy.

METHOD

The card case has a window cut in the back of the clear pocket side; this side is, of course, hidden from the querent when you take the case from your pocket. When you open it, the *DESTINY CARD* in the pocket covers the window; all seems fair.

The Two of Hearts is forced by the time-honored cut-deeper force. (Two of Hearts on top of tabled deck; querent cuts a small portion and turns it face up on deck. She cuts deeper, turns this

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portion face up on deck, and then looks at the first face-down card—which will be the original top card.)

(NOTE 1993: Maybe you had better use another forcing procedure—the cut-deeper force has been exposed several times in books for the public in recent years.)

After the querent has written a word or phrase relating to her question, you slide the playing card into the clear pocket of the case, *under* the white card already there. Thus when you remove the white card the playing card now conceals the window.

In putting the case away you glimpse the writing through the window and thus are able to answer the question from a layout of the playing cards.

Additionally, you might mark or corner-short the Two of Diamonds, and in the course of answering the question have the querent choose a "*Card of the Future*"—which turns out to be the mate of her Destiny Card...a very good omen. Both red Twos could be marked or corner-shorted, if you wish; thus you could first have the querent shuffle the cards, and then cut the Two of Hearts to the top as you explain how she is to select her Destiny Card.

DELL-EPATHY

(*Magick*, No. 321; July 1, 1983)

EFFECT

You hand a spectator a slate and a stick of chalk, and request him to print on the slate any three- or four-letter word.

You turn away as this is done, and pick up a small pocket dictionary. Asking the spectator to concentrate on his word, you leaf through the dictionary. You eventually stop and read a definition; it fits the spectator's selected word.

METHOD

You use the technique of pencil-reading. Here, however, you use an adjunct which will help considerably in homing in on the selected word.

The dictionary you use is not an ordinary one; it is the DELI CROSSWORD DICTIONARY (Dell paperback No. 163140). You have removed its cover and replaced it with the cover of an ordinary paperback dictionary.

The special feature of the Dell dictionary is its *Word-Finder* section (pages 220-384). If you know one or two of the letters, this section will enable you to locate any possible words with the known letters in given positions.

For example: you see the spectator make a straight line and two curved lines for the first letter, so you are reasonably sure it is a B. Likewise, you observe that the last letter is probably a W. Looking at page 280 (in the edition specified) you find the listing B**W at the bottom of the page, and from it you learn that the word can only be one of four: BLEW, BLOW, BREW or BROW.

Given this range of possibilities, and what you noted of the two unknown letters, it is fairly easy to get the word. If the third

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letter is one stroke (the O), the word must be BLOW or BROW—etc. Even if you have no clue as to the missing letters, the listing provides you with the group from which to pump.

When you are sure of the word, you turn to another page and apparently read the definition; in fact you ad lib a definition to suit the selected word.



Some years after writing the above I came up with the following high-tech version of the same effect...

AURORACLE

(Magick, No. 472; May 29, 1992)

EFFECT

Your only visible props are a packet of index cards and two marking pens. Handing about half the packet to a spectator, you request that she write any standard English word on one of the cards, printing it clearly so everyone will be able to read it later; she is then to bury it in her pocket.

Without ever approaching her, you make a few scribbles on one of the cards you hold—and then divine the word.

METHOD

The primary technique is pencil-reading; you watch the motion of the marker to discern the letters. (Note: since the marker has a large nib, the spectator must print larger letters in order for them to be legible; this simplifies your task considerably. However, you also have a secret electronic device to assist you in discovering the word.)

It is called the Aurora SC-5 EZ Spell™. Available in many electronics stores, and roughly the size and thickness of a dozen playing cards, it is embedded in the hollowed-out stack of index cards you retain when you hand the other half to the spectator. Its keys are set flat onto its plastic-membrane surface, so there is no sound when it is used.

You watch the spectator as she writes; let's say that from your observation you know that the first and second letters are B and R—you don't know the third and fourth—and the fifth (final) letter is N. As you talk you simply punch BR??N into the EZ SPELL. (The device is so small that this can easily be done with short movements of the thumb; the technique is in fact very similar to that used to thumb-write on a card held in the hand.) The EZ SPELL will display a notice that it is looking

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id then bring up the word BRAIN. If you press the *down* arrow it will show RAWN; another press displays BROWN; and another press displays the word *nd*, indicating that these are the only three words that have the letters in the position specified. From this point, knowing the possibilities, you can simply *ump* for the correct word.³

For the final revelation, you take a loose card from the bottom of your stack and write the word; have the spectator remove her word card from her packet—and then display to the audience the two cards bearing the same word.

The EZ SPELL has a memory containing several thousand words; however, to make things easier for yourself you ask for a "standard English word" to keep the spectator from coming up with some polysyllabic nightmare containing twenty letters.

³Of course she might have picked BRUIN, which isn't in the device's memory, in which case you're out of luck—but who ever told you that technology would solve all your problems?

KYSTIC

(Magick, No. 411; Oct. 7, 1988)

EFFECT

You show a deck of cards in its case and ask a young lady for her favorite card. "The Four of Clubs," she might answer.

"If it's really your favorite card," you continue, "why don't you blow it a kiss?" Perhaps feeling a little silly, the lady does so.

You remove the deck from its case and display the cards; one card is seen to have the imprint in red of a kiss—and it is, of course, the Four of Clubs.

METHOD

The deck consists of rough-and-smooth pairs; the pairs are much like those in an Ultra-Mental Deck—i.e., the two values total fourteen and Hearts are paired with Diamonds, Clubs with Spades. Unlike the UM Deck, however, both cards of the pair face the same way.

On the back of the lower card of the pair and the face of the upper, the imprint of a pair of lips is made with red stamp-pad ink; novelty rubber stamps bearing a lip-print may be used to do this. In addition, the deck is marked on the back.

The cards should be paired so that when spread the face side of the deck shows all the even Hearts and Clubs and all the odd Diamonds and Spades. If the named card is one of these you spread from the *back*, splitting at the appropriate pair (guided by the marks). If the card is an odd Heart or Club, or an even Diamond or Spade, you spread from the face. In the case of the above named Four of Clubs you spread from the back, splitting at the companion card of the one named (the Ten of Spades); if the Ten of Spades is named, you spread from the face and split the pair at the Four of Clubs.

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Of course you never state at the outset on which side of the card the lipstick imprint will be found; you don't, in fact, say all that much, letting the effect speak for itself. While an extremely mystifying effect, this should be played with a light touch and humorous approach.

When doing this effect for a gentleman, you might ask the name of his favorite female singer or actress. When he tells you, you mention that by curious coincidence you performed for her recently and she kissed a card. If he and she are truly soul mates, he may be able to sense what it is.

(It is unfortunately necessary to add that in these weird times you must avoid doing this presentation for anyone who seems remotely likely to take it seriously.)

NO/NO.

(Magick, No. 442; July 13, 1990)

EFFECT

You hold a sealed envelope and announce it contains a prophecy. Pointing at a spectator, you ask him to name the first two-digit number that pops into mind; let us say he names fifty-two.

"Astounding!" you cry. "Amazing! Absolutely right. You're wonderful at this. Hmm... let's try something else." At this point there will be a mild laugh from the audience, since you make no move to show the prophecy. Instead, you scribble something on the back of the envelope.

Putting away the pen, you say to the spectator, "I've written a word in the English language. Honestly—do you have any idea what I've written?" The spectator says, "No."

"Even more amazing!" you respond. "Even more astounding! Look what I wrote..."

You turn the envelope around, and indeed you have written the word NO.

On the laugh, you say, "I do believe you people are a bit skeptical. Look, sir—first you named the number fifty-two, correct? As you see, the envelope is sealed; let's see what's inside." You tear open the envelope and hand the index card within to the spectator and ask him to read it aloud. He reads, "You will select the number 52."

METHOD

The effect is accomplished very simply. On the envelope you have previously written the word NO. It is a carbon envelope (a piece of carbon paper is taped inside the envelope to transfer writing to an index card), and the index card sealed inside has written on it *You will select the number* and a space left for the

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number. This space should be in the center of the card so you will know where to write on the outside of the envelope. The writing has been done through a sheet of paper and carbon so the number added later will match in appearance.

In performance, after the initial part of the presentation, you apparently write the word NO on the envelope. Actually, you write the just named two-digit number, using a pen which has been written dry; it acts as a stylus and the carbon in the envelope transfers your writing to the prediction card.

Since the word the spectators immediately see is two characters, and you have written two characters (actually two figures) all seems fair. You conclude the routine as indicated above, opening the envelope and removing the index card with your now-complete prediction; you hand it to the spectator to read.

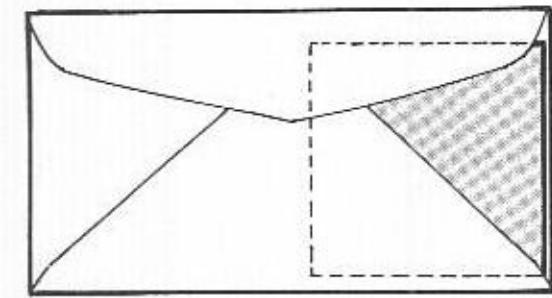
This is a nice and simple opener for an act, as it starts on a light note and then turns into a very solid mystery.

NOTE

As an alternative to the carbon envelope preparation, consider the following:

Separate the right seam on the back of a letter-size envelope; coat the two surfaces of this seam with rubber cement, and also the right side of the envelope flap and the place on the envelope proper where it will touch when the flap is closed. In the right triangle-shaped area of the envelope write the

word NO with a marking pen. Take a three-by-three-inch square of index card and place it over the word so that its left side goes between the two rubber-cemented surfaces, and its right edge is even with the right edge of the envelope. (In the illustration the index card has been shaded for clarity.)



Lick the left side of the flap and fold it down into place. If you hold the envelope at the right edge it should appear blank and normal.

In the routine, you (really) write the number on the card directly and then slide the card to the left. It goes completely into the envelope and the rubber-cemented surfaces close behind it; at the same time the pre-written NO is revealed.

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CREDITS

The NO gag is quite old, of course; the basic methodology here is that of my *Doublet* and *Trinital*, which you will find elsewhere in this collection.⁴

⁴Pages 303 and 751 respectively.

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The envelope setup is of my own devising, and I first used it in the early 1960's; some time later I encountered a similar notion by Gene Grant, who was the first to put it into print.⁵

⁵See *Vision Of The Future* in his PHANTINI'S INCREDIBLE MENTAL SECRETS, page 57.

TOUCHÉ

(*Magick*, No. 365; Feb. 21, 1986)

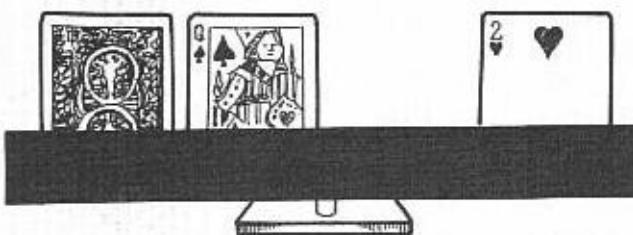
Paul Curry's Touch⁶ is a very strong two-card prediction; like many of its later variants, however, it used writing on the cards. In what follows no alteration of the double-faced deck is required, thus it may be used for other purposes.

EFFECT

You show two decks in their cases—one red-backed, one blue. Removing the blue-backed deck from its case, you spread it back outward and remove one card (its back to the audience) and place it in a simple wooden stand. (This stand is of a size to hold four cards upright side by side, and may be turned on a central pivot.)

Removing the red deck from its case you spread it face outward and have a spectator name any card that she sees; this card is removed and placed, face outward, beside the card already on the stand.

Saying you will try something different, you remove another card from the face-out deck and place it in the stand at the far end (the third position in the stand at this point is empty).



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Picking up the blue-backed deck you spread or deal them and a card is indicated by the spectator; this card is placed in the stand.

⁶Originally a marketed effect, which was later included in GREATER MAGIC, page 442, under the heading *Infallible Prediction*.

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When the stand is turned around to show the faces of the blue-backed cards, it is seen that you have successfully influenced the choices; the cards are perfectly matched.

METHOD

Required are a red/blue double-backed deck and a double-faced deck; this latter must not have any cards which show the *same* identity on both sides; the deck need not be complete, but must have complementary pairs (e.g., Queen of Spades/Two of Hearts and Two of Hearts/Queen of Spades), so that any card shown on one face of the deck is visible to you on the other face.

The double-faced deck, with one ordinary red-backed card on top, is in the red case; the red/blue double-backed deck is in the blue case with an ordinary card on the bottom, set so that you can remove it with the blue side outward and the ordinary card showing at the face of the deck.

In performance:

Remove the double-backed deck from the case—letting the audience see only blue backs, of course—and, after leafing through it a bit, remove one card and place it in the stand blue-back outward. This deck is placed on the table, the double-faced deck is removed from the case and (after allowing a casual glimpse of the top card) is spread to show the faces in normal fashion. A spectator names a card and this is removed from the spread and placed in the stand.

As you do this you note the identity of the card on the opposite side of the double-facer; as your second selection you remove the matching card on the audience's side of the deck.

Example: The spectator names the Queen of Spades from the spread she sees; as you place this card in the stand you see the Two of Hearts on its opposite side. You remove the Two of Hearts from the side of the deck facing the audience.

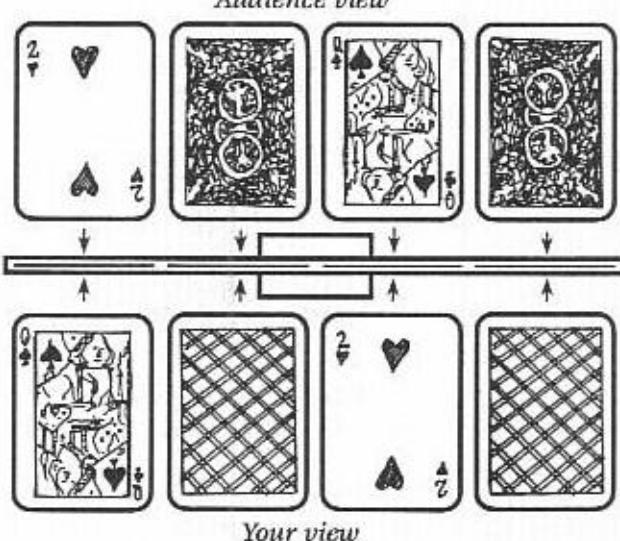
This card is placed in the stand in the fourth position; you then have a blue-backed card selected from the red/blue double-backed deck, and this is placed in the stand in third position.

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You have now only to turn the stand around—and take your applause.

NOTES

You can take the card for the fourth position—your



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second choice—out of the deck without, from the spectators' point of view, looking at the faces; since you know it has to have on the side facing you the card just named by the spectator (the Queen of Spades in the example above), finding it is as simple as looking through the deck.

While I mention this for completeness' sake, I don't know that it is a good idea.

In handling the cards reasonable care must be taken not to flash the other sides; other than that, this routine makes no technical demands.

SIGNSE

(*New Invocation*, No. 39; June 1987)

In January of 1986 Max Maven told me of Bob Farmer's notion of using the anagram principle for the divination of a spectator's zodiac sign. Before seeing Farmer's specific version I worked out my own system, along with a repeat version—both of which were shown to Max and a few people at the Magic Castle, and described in correspondence with Richard Webster (in letters of March and June 1986). This was well prior to the marketing of a similar effect.

EFFECT

You have a spectator think of his or her zodiac sign—and you call off various letters of the sign as they come to you in scrambled fashion; ultimately you name the sign.

METHOD

As stated above, this is an anagram-based divination of the branching variety used by Stewart James, Sam Schwartz and others.

As indicated in the chart at the top of the facing page, you begin by calling out the letter R—and from there you follow a simple rule: when the spectator responds *yes*, you proceed *down* the chart—if the response is *no* (the letter you called is not in the thought-of sign), you go to the *right*.

An example: you say R, they say *yes*; you *head down* and say I, they say *no*; you proceed to the *right* of the I and say A, they say *yes*; you *head down* and say C, they say *no*; you go to the *right* and arrive at *Taurus*, their thought-of sign.

Another example: you say R, they say *no*; you go to the *right* and say E, they say *yes*; you *head down* and say I, they say *no*—you go to the *right* and name their sign, which is *Leo*.

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R-----E	
I---A	I--LEO
C--TAURUS	G--PISCES
CANCER	GEMINI
S---A--VIRGO	
B--CAPRICORN	
LIBRA	
U---A--SCORPIO	
ARIES	
A	
Q---SAGITTARIUS	
AQUARIUS	

(Note: This last example, Leo, is the worst case, with two *no* responses to one *yes*; three others have the same number of *yesses* and *noes*, and the other eight have more *yesses*.

(You can change the spectator's *perception* of the situation by *continuing to call off letters after you know the sign*—with Capricorn, for example, you have five more letters you can name, but I'd say another three would be sufficient.

(Also, re *Leo*—on the *no* response to *I*, you could say, "You're sure there's no *I*? That's odd—I get a strong image of the word lion—oh, of course, *Leo*!")

A wonderful presentational notion devised by Stewart James⁷ is to tell the spectator to visualize the name of the sign painted in big letters on a white wall; you explain that your special perception will play across the word in the spectator's mind as a flashlight beam might move across a wall, and you will describe what's seen in your mind's eye. This gives some rationale for calling the letters out of order.

It may happen that you are asked to repeat this; if you wish to do so, obviously you can't repeat the same sequence of letters, and with that in mind I have devised a second chart, which is presented on the following page.

This arrangement is not as good as the first in terms of the yes-to-no ratio, but Gemini and Leo are the only bad ones—and since presumably you've already hesitated about trying the test again, due to the strain on your ESP abilities, any difficulty will only add to the believability. In this repeat version, however, I recommend that you do use the above-mentioned subtlety of calling out letters after you know the sign, to increase the perceived yes-to-no ratio.

⁷From his *Anagrammatic Facsimile* in *Tops*, Vol. 18, No. 3; March 1953; page 4.

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S-----I---E	
U---I	C---LEO
P---ARIES	CANCER
C	R---GEMINI
E---SCORPIO	O---LIBRA
PISCES	C---VIRGO
T---Q	CAPRICORN
I	
AQUARIUS	
R	
A	
U---SAGITTARIUS	
TAURUS	

The charts can be reduced in size on any photocopying machine with the capability, and the resultant cue-sheets can be taped inside the cover of a book or otherwise concealed in a fashion that allows you to consult them. Alternatively, you can simply memorize the procedure, which is not all that difficult.

This is not intended as a deep mystery, but it may come in handy for those times when a person buttonholes you and yells, "What's my sign?" However great the temptation may be to respond, "Bad Moon Rising!" you can do this instead....

ULTRAST

(*New Invocation*, No. 47; October 1988)

EFFECT

You exhibit a small leather or wooden case, on one side of which is inscribed an astrological wheel. After a brief spiel relating to the zodiac, you ask your subject to name her birthdate. "February seventeenth," Kate responds.

This date is, you point out to the others present, in the sign of Aquarius. You turn over the case to reveal the following legend inscribed on the other side:

RED RULES THE FIRST QUARTER
BLUE RULES THE SECOND QUARTER
GREEN RULES THE THIRD QUARTER
BLACK RULES THE LAST QUARTER

Referring to the astrological wheel again, you show that the date given, February 17th, is obviously in the last quarter of Aquarius; thus Kate's sign is ruled by the color black.

The case is opened and from it is removed a curious deck of cards, consisting of the twelve signs of the zodiac in each of four colors—red, green, blue and black. One card is face down among the spread face-up cards; it proves to be, of course, the Aquarius card in the color black.

METHOD

No surprises here; we have simply a *Zodiac Deck* (which consists of the twelve astrological signs printed in each of four colors, forty-eight cards, plus two Sun cards and two Moon cards) set up as an Ultra-Mental Deck: the cards are paired back to back with roughing fluid on the inner surfaces and talcum powder worked into the outer surfaces. So that all signs and

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colors show no matter which side of the deck is up, one side shows the first two weeks (red and blue) of the first six signs, and the last two weeks of the remaining six. The cards are paired six signs apart—in other words, the *Red Aries* is paired with the *Red Libra* back to back; the *Blue Scorpio* with the *Blue Taurus*; and so on. You don't have to count months; when you show the Zodiac wheel on one side of the case (which may be cut from a magazine or book illustration) you simply note the sign *opposite* the named sign on the wheel.

The pairs should, of course, be well mixed to give a random appearance to the deck; they should *not* follow any specific numerical or astrological order, because this would make it easier for an astute spectator to note that only half the deck is on display. Also, you must always put the deck into the case the same way, so that you will show the correct side when the deck is removed.

While perfectly acceptable as a program item, I believe *Ultrast* would be most useful when you are asked if you can guess someone's birthsign. "I never guess," you intone, "and as for your birthsign, I knew it before we ever met..."

Used this way, this effect is a satisfying alternative to *Signse* previously described.

HEARTBREAKER

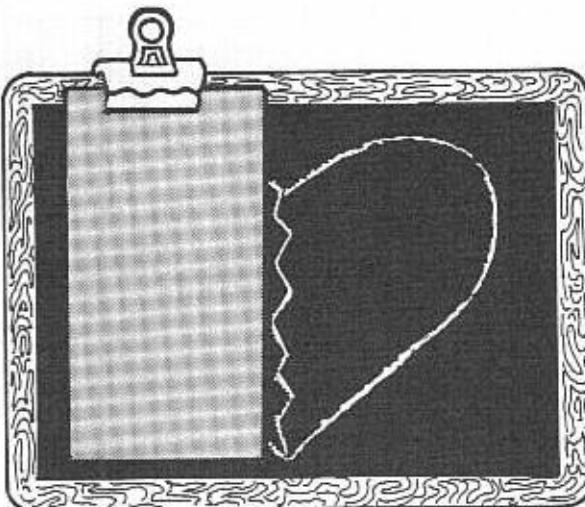
(*Genii*; Vol. 54, No. 5; March 1991)

I have long been an admirer of the work of Stewart James, and we have shared an interest in effects revolving around word-play—not surprising, I suppose, when you consider that STEWART is an anagram of T. WATERS.

The following is inspired by his *Half And Half*.⁸

EFFECT

You show a slate in a stand; the left half of it has been covered by a strip of card held by a clip, but the right half shows half of a heart design with a jagged left edge.



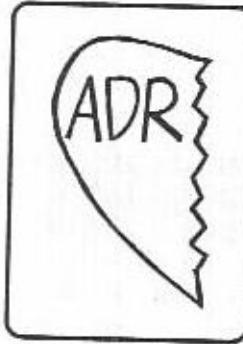
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⁸Which appeared in *The Jinx*, No. 134 (page 766), in ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS (page 184)—and of course in STEWART JAMES IN PRINT: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS (page 280).

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You say that you've recently had an unhappy romance, and you can't get the lady's name out of your mind—and since that's the case, perhaps some member of the audience will be able to pick up that thought.

You remove from its case a deck of cards; these are, in fact, double-blank cards on which some writing has been done. On one side of each card is shown the left half of a heart bearing the beginning half of a female name; on the other side is the right half of the heart, bearing the ending half of that name.



Side A



Side B

It is clear that all of the halves, beginnings and endings, are unique. To illustrate this you have someone name one of the beginning halves as you spread them; the card picked, for example, bears SAL. You show that the other side of the card completes the name with LY—SAL/LY.

This example is discarded into your pocket. You point to the slate and mention that you have written the beginning of your lost love's name on it. Spreading the deck with the ending halves face up, you have a spectator choose any of the cards. He picks, for example, GIE.

You again show that all the cards are different on both sides, and then on the exposed half of the slate you write the spectator's selection of GIE. You ask him to turn over the card and call out the first half of the name. He says, "MAR."

"Mar-gie," you say, completing the name. "Ah yes, my little Margie."

You remove the strip of card to show your previously written prediction in the half-heart on the left side of the slate. It is, of course, MAR, completing the name MARGIE.



METHOD

Since the half-name cards are shown to be different on both sides, and each one is shown to make up a complete and different name, it would appear that a force is ruled out. In fact it is a force, using a very special rough-and-smooth deck.

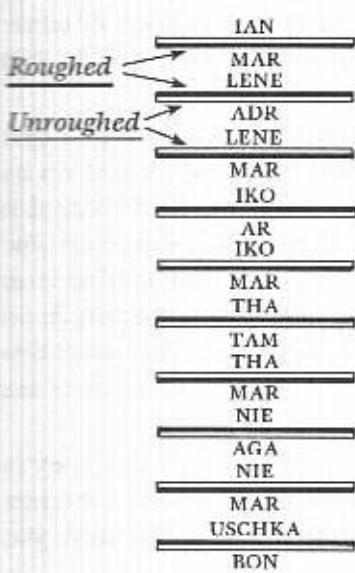
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Here are the names used in the effect:

ADR♦IAN	GABR♦IELLE	SUS♦IE	LU♦CIA
AR♦LENE	GLOR♦IA	CLAR♦ISSA	SABR♦INA
TAM♦IKO	BETT♦YANN	MEL♦ISA	TO♦NI
AGA♦THA	PAI♦GE	DRU♦CELLA	JUL♦IETTE
BON♦NIE	COO♦KIE	COL♦LEEN	VALEN♦TINA
VER♦USCHKA	PEG♦GY	EL♦LA	JUS♦TINE
ANI♦TA	HENR♦IETTA	SA♦SHA	AN♦GIE
NE♦VA	NAN♦CY	GEORG♦IANNA	SAL♦LY
	PAU♦LINE		

The ♦ indicates the point at which the names are divided. What makes this list of names interesting is that the beginning half MAR will match with *any of the last halves of the names shown*, to make a legitimate and logical name! Some of the names are more common than others, to be sure—MAR♦IE, for example, is more often seen than MAR♦CELLA—but both are real names. I should point out that there are thirty-three names in the above list, so if you are using a standard double-blank deck to make up this effect, you will only need twenty-six names and can eliminate the seven of your choice.

To make up the deck, draw the left half of a heart on one side of each card, a right half-heart on the opposite side. On twenty-six cards you write the force beginning—MAR—on the left half-heart of every card, and the twenty-six different endings on the opposite sides. On the other twenty-six cards you write the beginning half of a name from the above list on the left half of the heart, and the ending half of the *next name on the list* in the right half heart on the opposite side of the card.



That sounds a little complicated but there is a reason for it; using the order of the names as given above, here's a schematic of how a ten-card portion of the deck would look, pair-by-pair, indicating what is written on the upper and lower surfaces of each roughed pair.

This sequence continues and cycles. If the last name on your list is PAIGE, for example, and you have cut the cards so that its GE ending shows on top of the deck, removal of that GE card should show IAN, cycling into the name ADRIAN with which the list begins.

With the deck roughed and assembled in sequence as just indicated, you have only to draw on your slate a heart with a break down the center, and write MAR in the left half, covering it with the strip of card and clip.

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In performance, you show the deck as described in *Effect*. Holding the deck with the name endings facing upward, you have one name-ending indicated and cut this to the top of the deck; you pick off the roughed pair as one and show that they make up a complete name. This establishes the fairness of the deck and the names.

Now you have a spectator actually make a selection as you spread the cards slowly. He indicates a name-ending and you cut the deck at that point, bringing it to the top. You may spread the cards at this time so that he sees the card beneath the top card (actually a roughed pair)—even commenting, if you wish, “*If you had gone one card further you'd have chosen this ending.*” Squaring the cards, you remove the top single card and hand it to the spectator, cautioning him not to turn it over yet. Since the name-ending now on top of the deck replicates that of the card directly beneath it, nothing appears to have changed and all seems fair.⁹

It remains only to have the spectator turn over his card and call out the first part of the name, and then show your prediction to be correct.

NOTES

As a presentational fillip, it might be useful to have some comment you can make about any of the names—for MARNIE, you might wonder if your lost love was named after the Hitchcock heroine; MARTINA suggests the tennis champion; MARKIE, Miss Post of *Night Court*; etc. This off-hand comment would subtly sell the idea that this was the one and only name that could be chosen.

Also, when you do the “*trial*” selection before the actual choice, you show what is written on both sides of the card (actually a roughed pair, of course) and call out the complete name—don’t do it in half by half fashion or some people might later recall the name and figure that MAR could also fit that ending.

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(NOTE 1993: As an alternative to this “*trial*” selection, you might have one extra card in the deck; not roughed, it bears the two halves of a name on its two sides—CLAU on one side and DIA on the other, for example. This card is anywhere in the deck; seemingly at random, you take it out to illustrate how the deck is made up, showing it very freely—and then discard it, tossing it on the table. This casual handling does two things—it shows a name which, an analytical spectator will realize, couldn’t begin with MAR—and the casual toss shows it to be an ordinary card and implies strongly that the other cards are just as innocent.)

Female performers might alter the presentation to a notion that they’re thinking of a name change, and perhaps a spectator will sense the new name they’ve chosen. Another approach might be the name of a romantic rival; you

⁹This is adapted from Al Baker’s *Number Force* in his MAGICAL WAYS AND MEANS, page 85.

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found a scrap of paper with just part of the name left on it. (Of course, a list of male names might be devised, but not easily—I didn't call this effect *Heart-breaker* just for the plot!)

Some alternative names to those listed above include:

VIV♦LAN, GILL♦IAN, RI♦TA, SON♦IA, DEL♦IA, CAR♦LA,
JO♦LENE, AN♦NIE, MEL♦INA, and EIL♦LEEN.

THE CRIMSON COUNT

(MIRACLES OF MY FRIENDS; 1982, ed. Burt Sperber)

EFFECT

Holding up a packet of jumbo cards, you explain that some choices people make are easier to predict than others. *'For example, you say, "if you ask someone to name a color, more often than not the answer will be 'red'. But if you ask for a number between one and ten..."'* You gesture with the packet of cards. *'No telling what response you will get. Somewhere among these ten cards I have placed a red one. Since I have named the color I will ask you [indicating a spectator] to call out a number between one and ten.'*

The spectator does so; you count very fairly to that number and there, sure enough, is the red card.

METHOD

There are actually *eleven* cards; nine of these have blue backs and black faces (Clubs or Spades). The third card from the top of the face-down packet has a blue back and a red face (Heart or Diamond); the fifth card from the top has a red back and a black face.

It will be seen that by counting from the top or face of the packet—and taking either the card at the number or the next card following, any number from two through nine inclusive will get you to either the red-backed or red-faced card.

When the card will take you to the first of the two cards you should make sure not to expose the card further along in the packet.

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Example: the spectator has named the number six, which means you will be counting from the *face* of the packet. This you do and arrive at the card with the red back. Take this card from the packet, turn the packet over and fan it so the audience can see the blue backs. (They won't notice that there is one more card than there should be in the fan.) Then show the red back of the card you hold in your other hand.

Essentially the same procedure is used when the packet is *face down*; count to the third card (being careful not to expose the red back further on), show the black faces of the packet, and then show the red face of the card you hold.

In the cases where the count will get you to the further of the two cards, obviously you keep the packet facing the same way at all times and do not expose the other sides of the cards.

To make the count a bit more convincing:

When the number called will end right on one of your two cards, you count by taking a card from the packet, holding it and saying, "One," then placing it under the packet. This procedure is repeated until you arrive at the card, so you will be holding it as you call off the named number.

If, on the other hand, the number called will bring you to one position prior to one of your two option cards, you count by moving a card from top to bottom of the packet, saying, "One," as this action is completed. In this way, when you arrive at the end of your count the card at the number will be out of view under the packet and the only card in view will be one of your two option cards. Performed this way the count seems quite fair.

When you ask for the number, the packet should be held facing the audience, perpendicular to the ground; this is so that you don't make an obvious adjustment move of turning the packet face up or down for the count.

You might want to make your two option cards an Ace and a Ten in the event you encounter someone who ignores your "*between one and ten*" instruction and names one of those two values. If this happens you simply snap the cards into a fan (faces or backs showing as appropriate) and show that the value named is the only red card. If you do this you should make the other black faces a run of values Two through Nine, and one of the values will have to be duplicated to give you the proper number of cards (I suggest the duplicate be an Eight or Nine). The cards must not be arranged in numerical order, as this would render the count somewhat illogical. In this situation, when you show the faces you would keep the fan somewhat in motion, showing it only long enough to establish that all the cards are black except the named value which you extract.

One final point—you could, if you wish, eliminate the red-card angle and do the effect by drawing an X on the face of the third card down and on the back of the fifth card. You would alter your patter accordingly, saying you marked one of the cards with a large X; you don't say where. This version

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could also be done with your signature by confining it to one vertical half of the card; you would then have considerable leeway in spreading the packet.

The effect is not a profound mystery, and to spend more than ninety seconds on it is probably unwise.

CREDITS

The eleven-card count (sometimes known as the European 10/11 force) is the invention of Corvello.¹⁰ Dai Vernon used the red-card angle in his *Mental Die*¹¹, and there have been a number of items in print using it, including my *Longwave* (page 649); I suspect they may all stem from the two X-marked cards that are among the 'outs' in Ralph Hull's *Name O' Card* routine¹².

¹⁰Corvello's force seems first to have been described in English in *The Blonker Cards Of Ken Brooke*, a marketed item.

¹¹Marketed by Tom Palmer around 1963, and re-released as *The Crystal Cube* by Magic, Inc. in 1970.

¹²This appeared first as a booklet in 1932 and later in abbreviated fashion in Hugard's *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARD TRICKS*, page 237.

CARTOMANIC

(MIRACLES OF MY FRIENDS; 1982, ed. Burt Sperber)

EFFECT

From a borrowed, shuffled deck a spectator thumbs off five packets of five cards each; stacking them in any order he hands them to you. Approaching another spectator, you ask him to think quickly of any card from the first group of five which you take from the top of the twenty-five-card packet. The spectator does so and you place this group of five on the bottom of the larger packet.

You remove another group of five and show them to a second spectator, who likewise thinks of a card; this group is also placed on the bottom of the packet. The process is repeated three more times.

You ask the five people thinking of cards to stand and concentrate on their selections. You rapidly run through the packet, faces toward you, and upjog five cards. These you remove and set the rest of the cards aside.

"*These are the thoughts I get,*" you say, and call off the names of the five cards. "*If I named your card, please sit down.*" All five spectators take their seats!

METHOD

This is simply an extension of the principle behind the *Tossed-Out Deck*. When you replace the first packet of cards on the bottom of the larger packet, you immediately execute a shift to pass them back to the top. You show the same group of cards to the second spectator, and repeat the whole procedure thrice more, so that all five spectators see the same group of five cards.

Since you are moving about the audience as you go from one spectator to another, you have considerable cover for

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doing the shifts. (Also note that with less than half a deck the shift is much easier to execute.)

After the fifth spectator has made his mental selection you place the group on the bottom of the large packet as before and again pass it back to the top as the spectators are asked to stand and concentrate. Turning the packet toward yourself, run the cards from hand to hand, upjogging about five cards at intervals.

(Note: do not make these *regular* intervals—just upjog one card at random from each succeeding group of five.)

You apparently remove these five cards, but actually perform the Dai Vernon BDV move¹³, exchanging the upjogged cards for those at the top of the packet which are, of course, the cards looked at by the spectators. The effect concluded as previously indicated.

The reason for the upjogging and switchout is to establish clearly that the selections are coming from five different groups, an idea which you must sell in whatever subtle way you can.

Obviously this is not an effect for the hesitant or nervous performer; the spectators must be controlled to make their selections quickly, else they may have a chance to remember more than one card. Likewise, at the end you must make the procedure play strong and logically.

As to performance situations—this effect should *not* be performed at a party or similar social circumstance where spectators might have a chance to compare notes later.

Also, there are similar versions of the same general effect in routine by Stewart Judah¹⁴, Paul Fox¹⁵ and others, and these may have advantages over the method just described in the context of a formal show. My main purpose here has been to describe a technique whereby you can achieve this kind of effect without need for any preparation whatever or recourse to arcane dealing procedures.

NOTE

It is possible to develop variant routines—for example, after the spectator has made a mental selection you might apparently drop this packet on the table retaining the first packet for the other four spectators by means of a series of packet switches. I honestly don't think this sort of thing is worth the trouble. If you can work strongly and with assurance, the procedure as given will work fine—and if not, it is probably better to avoid this kind of effect entirely.

¹³Described on page 35 of the present volume, and in *Phoenix*, No. 248; page 990.

¹⁴See the letter from George Heubeck (misspelled as Henbeck) in *Pallbearers Review* Vol. 3, No. 4; Feb. 1967; page 160.

¹⁵Paul Fox's *Miracle Gimmick*.

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CREDITS

As previously indicated, this handling was inspired by the *Tossed-Out Deck* principle, in the application popularized by David Hoy.¹⁶ A version of this general type of effect which combined that principle with a prepared multiple-bank deck was described in the *New Pentagram* by Bernard Weller and Peter Warlock¹⁷.

¹⁶See his *BOLD AND SUBTLE MIRACLES OF DR. FAUST*, page 25.

¹⁷Vol. 7, No. 6; Aug. 1975; page 45.

COUNTACT

(Previously unpublished)

This is a straightforward divination combined with a simple prediction, accomplished with few props and very simple means.

EFFECT

You show a number of index cards and hand one to a spectator asking her to write a word or phrase that will fix her question in her mind. She does so, and you retrieve the card. Making it very clear that you do not see what has been written, you bury it in the center of the stack of cards.

Removing one from the top, you note down a prediction; this card, too, is buried in the stack. The spectator is now asked to choose one object from a few you put on the table (keys, ring, coin, etc.); this, you explain, is to make sure the two of you are on the same wavelength.

This done, you ask her to pick up the packet and check your prophecy card; it is correct. As she still holds the cards in her hands, you divine the question and answer it in suitably mysterious fashion.

METHOD

The only preparation is to have seven index cards ready; on the lower surface of the third card down you have written the name of whatever object you will later force with equivocation.

You drop the cards in slightly spread fashion on the table; as you talk you pick up the upper four of them with your left hand at the left edge. Your right hand takes off one card and hands it to the spectator for writing. When she has finished you take back (writing side down, of course) in the right hand by the right edge. You now apparently place the card into the center of the packet.

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What seems to happen is that the left hand approaches and deals another card on top of the question card; really, you do the first part of an Elmsley count, pushing off two from the left hand and taking the question card back under the remaining card in the left hand.

The two cards in the right hand are placed onto the three cards on the table, and the right hand then deals the two cards the left hand holds singly to the tabled packet. The spectator thinks the question card is in the center of the packet; actually it is on top.

You pick this card up, writing toward you, and note the information as you simulate writing the prediction. You now insert the card in the center of the tabled packet. It remains only to force the object using equivoque, and bring the effect to its conclusion as described above.

You need not, of course, use the equivoque; any simple force will do as well.

PSYCHL

[1983]

SEVERAL OF THE items within this section were originally intended to be marketed. I finally decided that such a course of action would involve a lot of busywork that did not particularly interest me, and this collection is the result of that decision.

I have never been greatly sanguine about the future of mentalism as a theatrical art form, and little has happened to change that opinion. We continue to be plagued with those who, determinedly ignorant of the basics of mentalism, keep re-inventing old effects—or who, ignorant of the basics of theatre, create effects that are for all practical purposes nonpresentable. In my own work I've tried to avoid the former of these two faults as much as humanly possible—I've been somewhat less successful in completely avoiding the latter, but I usually warn you when that's the case...

...and, of course, it is impossible to know for certain; I've seen effects which I thought were terrible made into something acceptable by brilliant performance. We should hardly conclude from this that material doesn't matter; while we've all heard of the great actor who could make the phone book entertaining, most great actors know better than to try—being able to select good material is one of the things that makes them great.

If you have any questions regarding the effects herein please contact me through Hermetic Press and I'll do my best to help.

TRICESSIVE

In this first offering I have combined two very old principles into what I believe is a very deceptive procedure. As you will see, it is capable of a large number of variations.

EFFECT

On your table are four clear glass tumblers. Three of these contain packets of cards; the fourth is empty.

Taking the first packet from its glass, you exhibit the faces of the five cards, which are seen to be the five ESP symbols (circle, cross, square, star, wavy lines). You invite a spectator to think of one of the designs.

Turning the cards to face yourself, you mix them a bit and then remove one card, dropping it back outward into the previously empty glass. Only after this has been done does the spectator reveal the design of which he has been thinking.

You take the second packet from its glass, and the five cards are seen to be letters of the alphabet: A, E, I, O and U. As before, a spectator thinks of one, you look over your cards, remove one and place it in the glass with your first selection. The spectator announces her choice.

The third set of cards shown to the spectators proves to be a random assortment of playing cards—the King of Hearts, Seven of Clubs, Ace of Diamonds, Four of Hearts and Nine of Diamonds. Again a spectator thinks of one—you remove one and drop it in the glass with the first two—and he names his selection.

When the three cards are removed from the glass and shown, they of course prove to be the three thought-of cards.

METHOD

This is simply a marrying of two classic principles, the one-behind procedure and the rough-and-smooth preparation of cards.

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All the cards used have the same back design and color; the Haines Fox Lake are the most readily obtainable with the required variation of faces.

Each packet of five cards is actually made up of five *pairs* of cards: the five ESP cards have their backs roughed—and paired to each of these is a card duplicating one of the playing cards of Packet Three.

In the same way, Packet Two shows five letter cards—and hidden behind each one by the rough-and-smooth principle is one of the ESP designs matching those in Packet One.

Packet Three shows the five playing cards; concealed behind each of these is one of the five letter cards.

Given this arrangement, the procedure is fairly straightforward. You show the spectator the ESP card packet, he thinks of one of the five designs, and you apparently extract a design card from the packet and drop it into the glass.

Actually, of course, you remove the Four of Hearts (of which more later), and it is this card that goes into the glass. The spectator then announces his choice.

The second packet is shown and the spectator thinks of one of the letter cards. Turning them toward yourself and mixing them a bit (this is necessary as otherwise the spectators might keep track of the identities of specific cards) you extract the named ESP symbol and drop it in the glass. The letter is then named.

You fan the packet of playing cards, the spectator thinks of one and, as before, you remove the named letter card and drop it in the glass with the first two selections. In the best of all possible worlds, the spectator names the Four of Hearts and you show that you have correctly discerned all three selections.

Now...as to the Four of Hearts...

...many of you will have recognized the five playing cards specified as those of the psychological force created by Dai Vernon¹. Given these cards, arranged in the order indicated, the spectator will think of the Four of Hearts in a very high percentage of cases.

But not all.

Given the procedure of this effect, the final selection has to be a psychological force; to vary your actions—to do, in fact, anything else than what you've done the first two times—makes neither logical nor dramatic sense.

In a real sense, this is not a problem. Irv Weiner has pointed out that while mentalists usually agree in theory that it is not only permissible but even advisable for a performer to make an occasional miss, to add verisimilitude to the act, few of them are really willing to put it into practice.

Listen, people, why do you think the people who wrote the *Superman*ⁿ comic strip invented Kryptonite? They did it because they had no choice; a hero who always wins and is not ever in danger is a pretty boring fellow.

¹EARLY VERNON, edited by Faucett W. Ross, page 20.

PSYCHL

So, too, is the mentalist who never misses. Do bear in mind that the premise of mentalism, whether it is believed or not, is not necessarily a pleasant one. If they think you're a kind of magician the subtext is often *I know something you don't, I can do something you can't*—or, more succinctly, *I'm smart, you're stupid*. If, on the other hand, they think you're for real, the idea that you can unfailingly enter their minds against their will is an even less pleasant subtext. In either case a resistance is likely to build up, and it can easily get to the point where they want you to fail, and are even willing to do what they can to bring the event about...or did you really think that all the deaths of magicians doing the bullet-catch were just accidents?

(Mentalists doing *Russian Roulette* please note.)

On stage one of your primary jobs is to get your audience to like you. Being perfect all the time can sometimes make you appear insufferable, not the best way of accomplishing said task.

I should enter a small caveat of my own here, which is that the *way* you fail in a particular effect has something to do with where you're performing.

By this I mean:

If you are working in the context of a lecture-demonstration—here I think it would be okay to miss on one effect completely. However—if you are to be seen in the context of performer rather than demonstrator-of-a-skill, as an act in a show-business situation rather than on a lecture platform, then I think the miss should be confined to a part of one effect...

...precisely as in the effect under discussion. Here you successfully read two minds out of three...and the spectator with whom you failed can always be used in your next effect, where of course you succeed in grand fashion. That should be enough for anybody...

...oh, all right: when you go to the third spectator you say, "*I have a suspicion that you might be a bit of trouble for me—but I think I'm prepared for you.*" If, in fact, the psychological force works, this line will be forgotten. If the force doesn't work, you remind the audience of your comment and then extract from your pocket your trusty Humber wallet. In each side is a double envelope, thus covering the other four possibilities; the note inside each envelope reads something along the lines of "*You did first think of the Four of Hearts...but then you changed your mind and finally decided on the Nine of Diamonds.*"

Given the basic procedure you will appreciate that there are a lot of ways in which you can construct the effect. You could, for example, use four packets of thirteen cards, each consisting of one complete suit; as each packet is in its separate glass, the spectators will not be able to discern that their aggregate thickness is twice what it should be.

Another approach would be to use twenty-six cards from the Syl Reilly Mental Pictoria deck, the twenty-six letters of the alphabet and an assortment of twenty-six playing cards—and for this latter you might consider doing an optical fan force. Of course you have to know which card is at the rear of a

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roughed pair. In the case of the alphabet cards and the Mental Pictoria deck you can pair them directly; in other cases, since the face-out card of the pair is never handled by the audience, you can simply write the identity of the rear card in white grease pencil at one end of the facing card. When you fan the cards you show the other end, but in any case the writing is not visible from any distance at all.

(NOTE 1993: A version of this effect, titled *Thrlink*, has been manufactured for me by Ton Onosaka of Japan's Magic Land. It uses three sets of cards—playing cards, ESP symbols, and a set dotted with one to five spots. The very ingenious Ton-san has also created a special gimmicked card, included with the set, which enables you to show any one of five outcomes! Thus—while you can use the psychological force if you wish—it is no longer necessary.)

NAMEWAVE

This is yet another approach to the Brainwave Deck; it is not intended as a replacement for that effect but rather as an alternate.

EFFECT

Putting the cased deck of cards on the table, you tell the spectator you have a "lucky card"—and that you've put it into the deck turned to face the other way (don't say reversed—a lot of spectators won't have any idea what you mean by that term).

"Everyone has a lucky card," you continue. "Why don't you name yours and we'll see how close it is to mine?"

The spectator names her card and:

1. In the great majority of cases you remove the deck from the case and spread the cards face up; one face-down card is seen. You now lift the cards up so the spectator can see the back of the deck and the face of the reversed (!) card; it is, in fact, her named card.

Or:

2. Let's say the spectator names the Three of Clubs. "Really?" you say. "Mine is the Jack of Hearts. Let's take a look." You spread the deck until the face-up Jack of Hearts is seen in the face-down spread. You remove it and the card next to it—which proves to be the spectator's named Three of Clubs.

METHOD

The pack is designed along lines first suggested by Peter Warlock.² Take from the pack the following cards:

J♣-K♥-2♣-A♣-A♦-2♥-J♣-2♦-2♣-Q♥-Q♦-7♦-6♦-9♦-A♥-A♣-Q♣

²See his PATTERNS FOR PSYCHICS, page 17; and later Pentagram, Vol. 11, No. 10; July 1957; page 75.

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These cards are roughed on both sides.

Set any one of the remaining cards aside, which leaves you with thirty-four cards; seventeen of these are roughed on the face, the other seventeen are roughed on the back.

The pack is assembled as a series of three-card packets, thus: a face-down card roughed on the face; beneath it one of the named double-roughed cards face up; and beneath that another face-down card which has been roughed on its back. As you assemble the deck you make a cue-list giving the order of the cards in the pack and in each set. This cue-list should be of a size that will allow it to be glued to the back of the card case.

The above list of face-up cards contains the seventeen choices a spectator is likely to name ninety percent of the time; a glance at your cue-list tells you where the named card is and you follow the procedure as described above. When one of the other cards is named you consult your cue-list to find out which face-up card is next to it, and name *that* as your lucky card.

The card set aside earlier can simply be placed in your outer breast pocket. When the spectator names his card you can, if it happens to be this one, shake your head in mock dismay and say, "No, *your* card isn't close to *mine* at all; *as a matter of fact it's the farthest away.*" You indicate your pocket and have the spectator remove the card.

JANUSSUM

EFFECT

You show a slate or large card and say that it holds a prophecy of actions about to be taken by two spectators; the prediction is placed on display.

Handing out two small white cards, you ask each of the spectators who receives them to write down a two-digit number. The two cards are then shown to both spectators and they mentally total the figures. Stressing the fairness of the procedure—neither spectator knew beforehand what the other spectator wrote and thus could not be helping you—you have them together call out the total. You turn around your slate; of course your prediction is correct.

METHOD

This is based on what I call the *Rashomon Principle*—used in such effects as the *Tossed-Out Deck*, *Smith Myth* and others—where in general terms spectators have differing views of what is taking place. More specifically it refers to a situation where a person, viewing one of two or more objects or items in a group and knowing it to be their own selection or object, assumes that the other objects belong to the other assisting spectators. (In the *Tossed-Out Deck*, for example, all three spectators may have chosen the same card—but on hearing the selections called out, each assumes that the other two named cards belonged to the other spectators.)

In this effect, you actually have *three* blank white cards—and a nail-writer.

You display the three cards as two. You hand one of the cards and a pencil to the first spectator and have him write down a number from ten to ninety-nine. This done, you retrieve card and pencil from him, casually noting the number. Since the

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prediction is already up on display there is no suspicion attached to this. Let us say that the first spectator's number is 80—and you have predicted a total of 125.

You hand one of the other blank cards to the other spectator, keeping the two remaining cards squared as one, and instruct her to write any number from ten to ninety-nine as did Spectator One. While she is doing this, you use the nail-writer to fill in the card that hasn't been used up to this point, secretly writing the number that will bring the first spectator's number up to a total of 125—in this case, 45.

Spectator Two completes her writing and returns the card to you; you note its number which (let us say) is 33. As you *briefly* recap what's been done, you toy with the (supposedly two) cards; during this you write the number 92 ($33 + 92 = 125$) on the other side of the card on which you have previously nail-written the 45.

You now fan the three cards as two to Spectator One, letting him see his 80 and the 45 side of your card—and he naturally assumes that the 45 was written by the other spectator. You ask him to make a mental note of the total.

The second spectator is likewise shown the three cards as two, seeing her 33 and the 92 she assumes was written by the first spectator. She, too, mentally totals the two numbers...

...and then, literally, it's all over but the shouting.

ALPHAROAH

Here are two rather curious approaches to a word prediction using a deck of Lexicon™ or alphabet cards; both techniques employ the faro shuffle.

Rather than describe this in terms of effect and method, I will give you the general preparation and the two procedures.

In both situations you presumably have a complete deck of alphabet cards from A to Z. You openly discard one card, say the Z, leaving you naturally enough with a deck of twenty-five cards.

In actuality you switch this deck for another one, using your own method or one I shall give further on in this section under the title of *Hexchange* (page 501). The deck now in play has five sets of the five letters that make up your predicted word.

PROCEDURE NO. 1

Let us presume that the word you are predicting is *clown*. You arrange the pack by having all the Cs together, beneath them the Ls, etc. (the order of the groups doesn't matter as long as all the cards of the same letter are together).

As you talk about your prediction, and the necessity of making sure that the selection is completely random, you divide the deck so there are thirteen cards in the upper half, twelve in the lower, and you then execute a straddle faro. (You do a perfect interlacing riffle shuffle of the halves so that the top card remains in that position and the original thirteenth card becomes the bottom card of the deck.) You repeat this three more times, making four shuffles in all.

You now deal the cards left to right to make a row of five; you deal another row of five beneath those, continuing until you have a five by five square of cards—five rows of five cards each. Odd as it may seem, if you follow the procedure given

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above, it will result in a layout where any horizontal, vertical or diagonal row of five cards will provide a complete set of five different letters. (The cards are, of course, dealt face down.)

A spectator makes a choice of any of the rows and, having done so, you hand him the cards and have him form a word from them; this done, you show your prediction.

Two points: clearly, the set of five letters must only be capable of making one five-letter word—if you don't want to take chances use Q and U as two of the letters; if given the letters Q-C-K-I-U a spectator can't come up with QUICK—he's too slow to be watching a mental act anyway.

Also, you may wish to do three of the straddle faros beforehand, so that after you have switched in this deck you have only to do one more.

PROCEDURE NO. 2

Here the deck has a cyclic arrangement, i.e., C-N-W-L-O-C-N-W-L-O-C-N-W-L-O...etc.; with the cards so arranged you do continuous straddle faros, stopping only when the spectator tells you to—at which point you hand her the deck and tell her to give it a complete cut and deal out the next five cards for herself.

No matter how many straddle faros have been executed, this procedure will result in the spectator getting, as before, a complete set of five different letters. Also as before, she arranges them to form a word and you reveal your prediction.

A word about the faro shuffle:

While it is sometimes difficult to learn to do this shuffle with the necessary air of casualness when using a full deck, you will find that with the twenty-five-card deck it is much easier to execute. If your cards are in reasonably good condition you will find that with limited practice the shuffle can be made to appear innocent and genuine.

You must, of course, learn to do it well enough that you can get the perfect interlace on the first try. I have often seen cardmen strip apart the halves and interlace them again; since what you are *supposed* to be doing is mixing the cards into a random order, this action is a *de facto* exposure of the principle. Let me say again that the twenty-five-card straddle faro is *not* difficult, and the most telling proof of that assertion is that *I* can do it.

TRANSCRIPT

Here we have something that is not so much an effect in itself as an angle on a standard of mentalism—i.e., the question-answering routine, or QA act.

Before getting to the specific angle, let me wax philosophical for a moment (and then philosophical can wax me for a while...) and look at the QA act itself.

As most experienced mentalists know, the appeal of the QA act is not in how you get the questions—and there are literally hundreds of methods for this—but the answers you give.

In general, your audience asks you for answers for the same reason they ask Abby, Ann Landers, Beth or the Playboy Advisor—which is that nobody gets an operating manual to tell them about Life and Love and Sex and Death and Money and all the other capital-letter categories. It is a common, a human tendency to want to be given an answer rather than to figure it out for ourselves—because by doing this we can displace responsibility for our actions onto the authority figures who have given us the instructions or advice.

The strength of this tendency, this aspect of human behavior, can't be overstated. In its mild forms it can cause us to choose one brand of aspirin over another because a TV doctor tells us to—and in its extreme form it can lead us to the gates of Dachau. As Stanley Milgram has pointed out in his book OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY, there are few things a human being cannot be made to do as long as they do not have to accept final responsibility for their actions.

I realize that this may begin to sound like a rather grim discussion for what is, after all, a book of mental effects—but it is sometimes useful to examine the *whys* behind the appeals of certain things done in the show business context. I could point out that the reason certain fictional characters—and the

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actors and actresses who play them—achieve such incredible popularity, is that they seem to defy authority and the established order—and so the member of the audience does so too, having a vicarious fictional experience that he or she could never hope for in real life.

As I pointed out in *OMNIMANCY*, the mentalist who does question answering has one great advantage—or disadvantage, depending on how you look at it—over most other givers-of-advice, answerers-of-questions. This has to do with the mentalist having seemingly demonstrated powers beyond those of ordinary mortals by discerning the thought-of question; it therefore follows that the mentalist's answer, presumably being generated by those same powers, has a far greater validity than would otherwise be the case.

There have been a number of mentalists who gradually became psychics—which is to say, they started with the one-ahead or the window envelope or the clipboard, and eventually discarded these devices when they realized they really didn't need to *prove* anything; that the audience simply wanted to ask its questions and receive the psychic's presumably supernatural advice. It was true of Gene Dennis half a century ago; it was true of the late and very great David Hoy a few years ago; and it is true now.

For all that—it takes iron nerve and boundless self-confidence to go out on a stage and trust to your native ingenuity and glib tongue to create a convincing picture of psychic wonderment. Such qualities are usually acquired over time, and during that time some support from subtle chicanery can be very comforting.

The angle I propose to describe is intended as an adjunct to routines where you give general answers or readings to various spectators, no questions having been written down or asked verbally. Some of these routines are:

Burling Hull's *Ultra Question Answering Act—With No Questions*

Written in his *AMAZING WORLD OF MENTALISM*, page 205 (edited by Stephen Minch)

William W. Larsen's *Tarot Telepathy* in *THE MENTAL MYSTERIES OF WILLIAM W. LARSEN, SR.*, page 43 (edited by William W. Larsen, Jr.)

W.G. Magnuson's *TWENTIETH CENTURY MINDREADING ACT*

George Anderson's *DYNAMITE MENTALISM*

And what is this angle?

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In the course of answering questions 'cold' you are scribbling impressions on a pad. Every so often you do a lead-in to an answer by scribbling something, glancing down at it and then saying (for example), "Someone here is thinking of a future journey, a trip out of the country—would that person raise his or her hand please?"

Let us say a lady raises her hand in assent; you ask her name which is (say) Joan Grant. "I thought so," you say, and as you begin to answer the question you hand her the pad. You do this without really seeming to be aware of it. On the pad is scribbled: *J.G. to take journey out of country*.

PSYCHL

Note that here the idea is that you are seeming to get your impressions by a form of '*automatic writing*'—and your scribbles are apparently not intended to prove anything to anyone. The fact that, several times during the act, they *do* seem to prove your psychic impressions to be correct, makes the action all that much more convincing.

You hardly need me telling you that all you write on the pad is *to take journey out of country*—or a statement appropriate to the question you're dealing with—and that when you find a person who in fact is thinking of such a question you get their name and then fill in the initials with a nail-writer.

You don't do this on every question, of course, and you don't always show what you've written—so it seems to the audience that you *could* be doing it with every question.

Rather than using initials, sometimes you can use a first name, if it is short enough. The name of the questioner is not the only thing you can do this with; you can also write such statements as *you're concerned about your upcoming _____ birthday or you are worried about a lost _____*—the empty space, of course, being filled in with age or object, using the nail-writer.

Again I must stress that this technique is not used as the central thrust of the question-answering; your own ability to answer questions must do that. What this does is to create a subtle aura of validity to the proceedings so that it is not '*just talk*'; it may be *mostly talk*, but along the way you provide proof that something strange is indeed going on.

HANDBOOK

One popular subdivision of divination effects has been that best described as the Who-Has-What routine. Many kinds of devices have been created to accomplish this—Mellon's Quantimental, Corinda's Money Box³, Cook and Buckley's *Behind The Eight Ball*⁴, Koch's Electronic Chess Piece Divination—and what follows is yet another approach to this problem.

Its major advantage is its simplicity; it has nothing to reset or replace, it is non-mechanical and non-electronic, and thus it is very nearly impossible to foul up—but perhaps its most valuable feature is that it appears improvised rather than a set piece requiring a specific piece of apparatus.

EFFECT

You show five ESP cards. Picking up a paperback book from among a number that have been used in a previous test, you insert the cards around the edges of the pages so that they project for about half their length. Placing the book behind your back (and if you wish you may be genuinely blindfolded), you have five spectators in turn take a card from the book, note it and place it in pocket or purse.

You know who has chosen which card and can immediately proceed with the divinations; this is done without any need to turn around or ask a single question.

METHOD

I really doubt that there can be a simpler method for this effect than what I am about to describe.

The paperback book is gaffed by having a window cut through all the pages from the middle onward to the end,

³THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, page 150.

⁴GEMS OF MENTAL MAGIC, page 66.



including the back cover. The illustration indicates the size and placing of this window and how the cards are positioned in the book.

Note that the window is *not* in dead center but toward the outer edge; this is so that, when the hand is holding the book with thumb above and fingers below, the area of the hand at the base of the fingers will keep the book closed—since the pages are getting no support from the fingertips.

Your fingertips are, in fact, resting directly on the faces of four of the cards—the first and second fingers on the first and second cards, the third and fourth fingers on the *fourth and fifth* cards.

As each card is withdrawn while you hold the book behind your back, you of course feel it and know instantly which card has been taken. Obviously enough, when you *don't* feel it, that means that the third card has been taken.

For those of you who'd like to paint the lily of this procedure a little bit, it should be noted that these removals can be felt through the thickness of a few pages. You therefore could trim the outer edge of the two pages just above the windowed section so that you could riffle to them, and as you inserted the cards the spectators could see that all was fair. You *could*—but it is hardly necessary; I only mention it for the paranoids among my readers.

In this connection I might also mention that you could do a book test earlier on with a duplicate book and then switch out—and this can be as blatant as simply putting the book in your ever-present attaché case and taking out the windowed one later on. Obviously there should be *some* reason for the book's presence other than to do this specific effect—that's what lends weight to the improvisational aspect. Another approach is to do a routine previously which uses a large number of books—the Jaks-Thompson *Mental Echo* routine⁵ is

⁵J.G. Thompson's THE MIRACLE MAKERS, page 259.

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one such—and simply have the gaffed tome as one of the 'extras' that doesn't happen to get handed out.

You will appreciate that the book thus simply gaffed is useful not only in the effect just described but in several others where hidden access is required. You could, for example, do a version of Sid Lorraine's *40,000 Word*⁶ in which you'd have a word chosen from a page (in the front half), written on a card and stuck into the book, where it could be glimpsed through the window.⁷

You could apparently note something down on a card and stick it into the book, after which a spectator would call out a number or item—which you would then write on the card through the window using a nail-writer.

I should say I suggest these things as *alternative* items rather than as things to be done one after the other. Yes, Fogel did a stage routine where four effects in a row were accomplished with a nail-writer—but, as I have had occasion to observe earlier in these pages, ain't none of us Fogel.

One point re handling: the book is not held in a flat plane parallel to the floor, but at about a forty-five-degree angle with the cards pointing downward at the lower outer edge. The reason for this is to conceal the fact that your fingers are going up into the book rather than resting on a solid flat back.

(NOTE 1993: An excellent lead-in effect for this is Phil Goldstein's *PSI-Con Ruse*⁸. That effect also uses, in very logical fashion, cards positioned around the edges of a book, but to a very different end.)

⁶ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 71.

⁷In this connection note *SideSideAl* on page 376 of the work in hand.

⁸Stephen Minch's NEW YORK MAGIC SYMPOSIUM COLLECTION FIVE, page 63.

WINDECKS

This follows logically enough from the previous item; it is basically a double prediction, but the handling is so constructed as to create a reasonably strong problem.

EFFECT

You show two decks of cards; one of these you place on the table (or, if you're working onstage, into a glass).

The other deck you spread face up in front of a spectator, inviting her to touch any card that she pleases. She does so and you instruct her to remove it from the spread.

Handing her a pencil, you tell her to write, say, any two-digit number on the face of the card. She complies with this request and you now draw attention to the deck of cards not yet used.

You remove these cards from the case and ribbon-spread them on a table; all are face up with the exception of a single face-down card in the center. You slide this card out and instruct the spectator to turn it over. When she does, it proves to be the selected card—*with the chosen number written on it*.

METHOD

Given the previous effect—and the title of this one—you will hardly be surprised to learn that a window is involved. We will get to that in a moment, but first let us deal (!) with the card force.

What you do is simply a classic force—with, as noted, the cards face up. You will find that this is much easier, in fact, than the usual face-down handling, for two reasons: first—you don't have to keep track of the card by breaks or steps, etc., because you can see it. Second—the procedure seems so completely fair to the spectator that her suspicions are disarmed.

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There will of course be times when the spectator either by bad chance or specific design takes another card; should that happen you simply segue into another force procedure. A simple force would involve bringing the force card to the bottom of the deck and beginning an overhand shuffle; the spectator inserts her face-up card in the now face-down deck and the remaining stock is thrown on top, bringing the face-up card face to face with the force card. You now ribbon-spread the deck and remove the two cards, stressing the randomness of the procedure. Try not to giggle.

Another approach to this would be to have the spectator insert her card partway into the deck and you handle it as with the well-known knife force (described on page 275).

In any case, by some means or other the card gets forced.

As to the other deck:

The twenty-six cards of the *upper* half of the deck have a window cut in them. The force card is just below these windowed cards, face *up*, and the rest of the deck is beneath the force card, face down. A window is cut in the back of the case to match the window in the cards.

You execute the card force as indicated above. In replacing the rest of the cards in your pocket you obtain your nail-writer. Given the situation, this must of course be one that you can affix instantly—either a Boon, band or thumb-tip writer. I recommend that it match the pencil you give the spectator to use, since this will imply that you used the same pencil to write the prediction on the card before the show.

The spectator having written the number on the card she holds, you note this number and inscribe it on the force card through the windowed half of the deck.

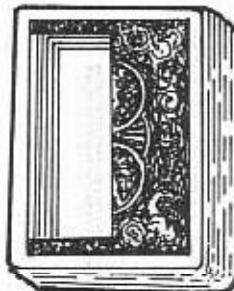
Removing the cards from the case, you replace the case in your pocket, getting rid of the writing device as you do so.

You now ribbon-spread the deck on the table; you do this, naturally, so that the windows are on the hidden halves of the cards. This appears very fair and open. You point out the face-down card and, having drawn it out of the spread, instruct the spectator to turn it over as you gather the rest of the deck.

500

I mentioned earlier the use of a glass to display the prediction deck. If you use this, you might consider employing one of those glasslike plastic tumblers; this would also have a window cut out of the back, and the Boon or band writer simply rests on the bottom of the tumbler behind the deck. It is not at all difficult to put the thumb through the window in the glass, get the writer on, write the number and let the writer go back down onto the bottom of the tumbler. You have a good deal of cover.

Thus all the dirty work has been done before you (apparently) even touch the cards.



HEXCHANGE

As I have described some things for which a deck switch might be a useful adjunct, it seems only proper that I should provide you with a technique for accomplishing this.

This particular deck switch, which I devised over twenty years ago, has a peculiar genesis. A friend of mine was performing a brilliant card routine for some other people, and I was watching from the side in a slouched position that did nothing at all for my posture. I mention my position because it enabled me to see, by a pure fluke, that the bottom card of the deck had seemed to change instantaneously. Coupling this bit of information with the effects presented, I came to the conclusion that my friend must have done a deck switch.

Getting him to admit it, however, was something else again; he is known as someone who rarely if ever tips his mitt, and all my powers of persuasion couldn't get it out of him. I didn't have much to go on; I persevered, however, and came up with the method you are about to read.

A footnote to all this is that some years later I finally learned, from another source, the technique he used.

I like mine better.



The action of the switch is this:

You are wearing a jacket and holding a deck of cards face up in your right hand; you are going to remove a pen from your left shirt pocket.

Your left hand pulls your jacket open slightly at the lapel, and your right hand, holding the deck, removes the pen from your shirt pocket. In that brief moment the deck is switched. The deck is out of sight for a split-second; it will, indeed, seem to the spectators never to have been out of sight at all.

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To accomplish this you need:

- a jacket with an inner left breast pocket
- a shirt with a left breast pocket
- the two decks of cards
- the pen or pencil, about seven inches long
- —and the SuperDuperLittleWonder Deck Switcher!

And what is this last, you ask?

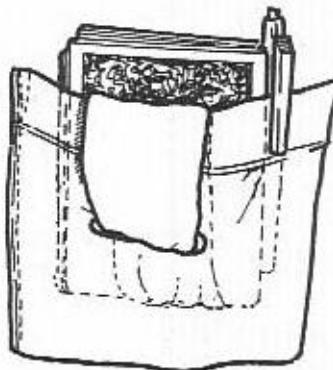
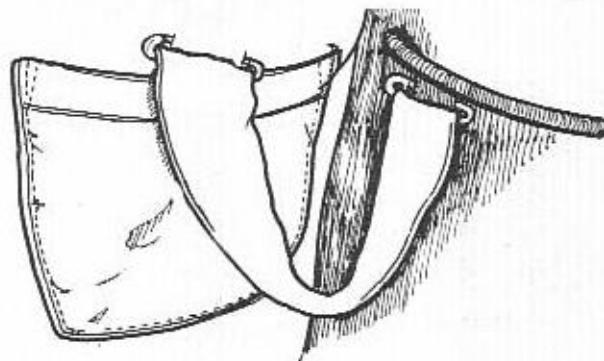
Well—it's a piece of white cloth ribbon, one inch wide and eight inches long, with a safety pin attached to each end of it. It'll cost you about a dime, but I think you will find it worth the expense.

You pin one end of the ribbon to the shirt proper, just above the top of the left breast pocket; the other end of the ribbon is pinned to the outer edge of the left inside breast pocket of the jacket.

The deck to be switched in is placed in the shirt pocket so that the ribbon goes down around the bottom of the deck and back up; the pen is placed to the left of the deck.

Given this arrangement, and holding the other deck in your right hand, you will find that when the left hand pulls the jacket open a bit the ribbon arrangement causes the inside jacket pocket to be pulled wide open.

Because of this, your right hand can go in and without any problem drop its deck into the inside jacket pocket. The left hand continues to



PSYCHL

pull the jacket pocket outward, and this action causes the deck in the shirt pocket to rise into your right hand (just like the thread in a rising card setup). The right fingers grasp the pen or pencil along with the deck and the hand comes into view again. The switch has been accomplished.

You will find that with practice you can do this switch very quickly indeed. Do not, however, get carried away with this, since the motion should not be any faster than it would be if you were actually doing what you appear to do.

In executing this switch you might stand at a slight angle, your left side nearest the audience. This position provides a bit of cover for the switch, and it's a position you will naturally take quite often when you have assisting spectators on the stage.

Given the mechanics of this particular switch, it can be done just as well from a seated position; thus it is just as useful for close-up performance as for stage work.

(NOTE 1993: a caveat here: when I originally described this, I had only rigged the gimmick in two jackets, and it worked satisfactorily. I have since discovered that, depending on the precise cut of the jacket, placement of the interior pocket, and even the kind of interior protective lining, it may not work as well as it should. You may have to experiment with various jackets to find one in which this gimmick will work properly.)

4CE

In Chapter 15 of his book *RIGHT UNDER THEIR NOSES*, George P. Sanderson describes under the title *The Feminine Influence*⁹ a particular approach to the forcing of one of four items—a routine inspired by Sanderson's dissatisfaction with a previously published routine.

The routines in question are of the *Bank Night* kind—four boxes or four envelopes are used; three spectators each choose a box and, while each gets a small prize, the object of real value is found in the performer's box which remains.

What follows is an adaptation of the Sanderson routine to more familiar objects, with some psychological touches and some simplifications in handling.

EFFECT

On your table you have four boxes; each is decorated with a large playing card pip—the first has a Heart, the second a Diamond, the third a Club and the fourth a Spade.

Holding up a small folder, you mention that it contains a poker hand, a Five-high straight. *In fact,* you say, *"since we're only going to be using four people in all, we won't need the Five."* You remove from the folder one playing card, show that it is in fact a Five, and place it aside. Pointing out that the remaining cards are an Ace, Two, Three and Four—one of each suit—you have three spectators each name a value.

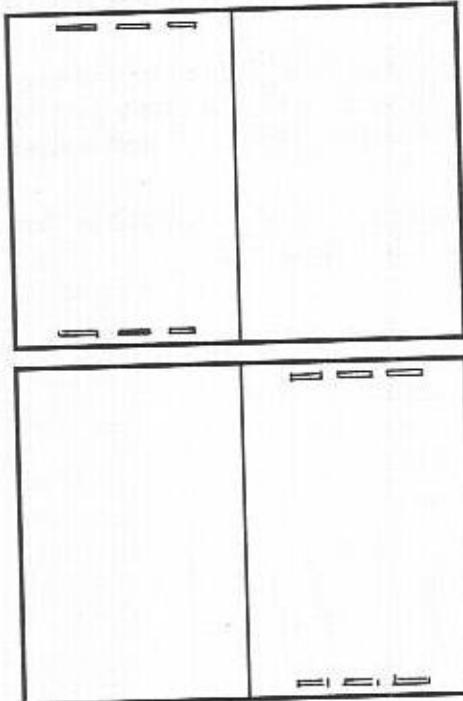
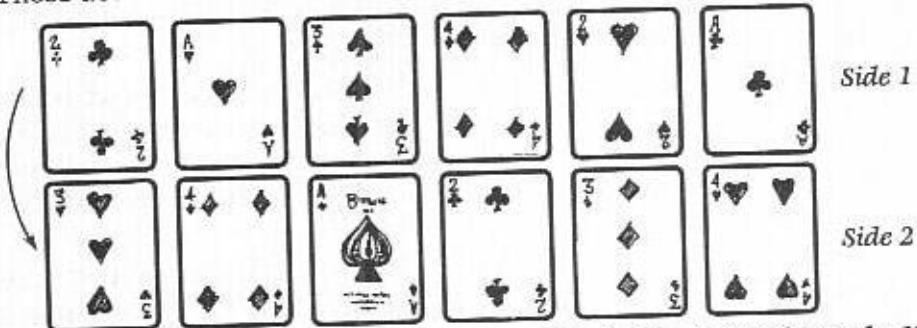
They do so and you dump the cards out of the folder and fan them. Let us say the spectators have chosen the Two, Three and Four; the fanned cards are seen to be the Ace of Hearts, Two of Clubs, Three of Spades and Four of Diamonds. The spectators take the boxes appropriate to their chosen suit, leaving you with the Heart box—which, of course, contains the valuable prize.

⁹Page 52.

METHOD

For this you need six double-faced cards and a folder to be described. Since the cards are never handled by the audience they can be made by simply gluing the cards back to back.

These double-faced cards are:



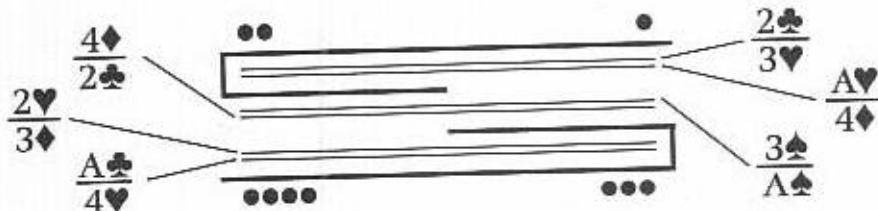
The folder is simply made. You will need two pieces of index card stock, three by six inches, and a stapler.

Fold back two inches of one card's length so that the folded card is now four inches long with a two-inch deep pocket, which you staple closed at the sides; repeat this procedure with the other card.

Now put the two pocket-cards together with the pockets face to face on the inner surfaces but at opposite ends; staple them together at the sides only.

With the cards in the order shown above, and holding the folder horizontally, parallel to the floor, you put the first two (showing Two of Clubs and Ace of Hearts) in one of the pockets,

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named side upward; the next two (showing Three of Spades and Four of Diamonds) go in the area between the two pockets; and the last two (showing Two of Hearts and Ace of Clubs) go into the lower pocket, being put in from the other end.

As a trial will show—depending on which end you dump the cards from and which side of the folder is facing the audience, you will be able to display the four cards so that the Heart—which is the force suit—can be shown to be the one value not named by the three spectators, while the other three suits will show the other three values.

You make one, two, three or four pencil dots at each end and each side of the folder to tell you what value will show as the Heart suit if you dump the cards from that end and with that side showing. Two cards—either the upper or lower pair—will always be retained in the folder by the orientation of the pockets.

The only other preparation is to add a Five of any suit to the two cards in the center compartment. When, in the presentation, you remove this card and set it aside, the casual display of the back is an added convincer that the cards are what they appear to be.

As you can see, this is adaptable to any sort of *Bank Night* presentation; it would be particularly appropriate in conjunction with the many psychic gambling routines in print. I refer you to the Sanderson book mentioned above for his charming presentation.

The force sequence appears very fair—and you will note that it can be done just as easily with jumbo cards as with the more usual type.

PSYCHOGRAPHITI

The following routines all have the same thing in common—the appearance of a message or some other writing or drawing on a surface of one of two cards after all four surfaces have been fairly shown.

They are all based in large part on Annemann's *Psychic Writing* which appeared in his MENTAL BARGAIN EFFECTS¹⁰. Another influence here was a routine marketed by Ed Mellon in the 1950's—the title of which was, I believe, *Out Of The Fifth Dimension*.

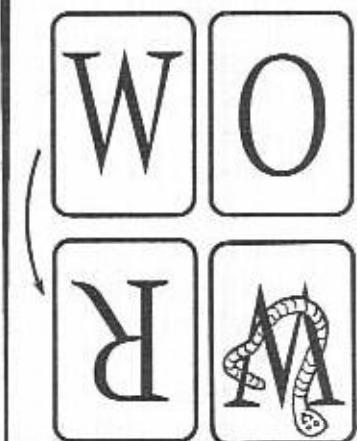
Another thing held in common by the routines to follow is that they are all intended as amusing quickies—and to make anything more of them would be, in my view, a considerable error.

CARDWORM

You say that everyone has heard of bookworms but very few have heard of cardworms, little creatures who plague those who work with cards. Taking two cards from your pocket, you show them to be alphabet cards with a letter on each side. The four

letters are seen to spell W-O-R-M—and when, after a brief pause, you spread them apart, sure enough a cardworm of the cartoon variety is seen to have twined itself around the W, from which vantage point it smiles out at the assembled populace.

Your cards are a W backed with an R (the R is reversed in relation to the W—in other words, if you



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turn the card end over end the letters are correctly oriented). The other card bears an O backed with a W—and it is this W that has the cartoon worm drawn on it.

The cards are held together in the hand with the regular W showing on the upper card; the O of the bottom card is on its upper surface.

You show the W—take the card by its outer end and, turning it end over end, you replace it underneath the other card in a sort of forward rotation. You show the O and repeat the previous movement, being careful not to show the underside of this card as you place it underneath the card in your hand. You now show the R—and flip this card over *sidewise* to show what is apparently the M; actually it is the first-shown W, now reversed to do duty as the other letter.

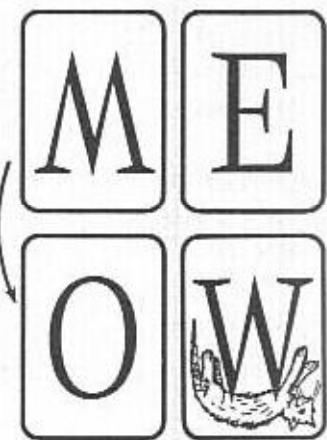
You conclude by spreading the cards to show the arrival of your pesky friend.

MEOW

A simple variant of the above—in which the four letters spell out M-E-O-W and, on being spread, reveal a scraggly cat perched atop the M. The working is identical to the previous item, the only difference being that here the M does double duty for the W instead of vice versa.

VELLEDA BABY

In this approach the handling is the same, except that the first letter seen is changed into the last letter not only by reorientation but by physical alteration.



To do this, what will be the ending letter is drawn on the card, the card then being covered with clear plastic. The rest of the letter is then drawn on the plastic with erasable marker matching that used for the first part.

An example would be a P drawn on the card proper; after the plastic sheet is affixed, a lower loop is added to change the P into a B. You could, thus, show the two cards to spell out BURP or BUMP—four letters—yet one side is never seen. On this side is, of course, a B (drawn as much like the first one as you can manage) with the message or picture over-printed on it.

Of course all four sides of both cards are covered with the plastic sheeting for uniformity of appearance.

(Note: it may be thought that this could be simplified by using the erasable-marker surface [available in art stores] and a combination of erasable and non-erasable markers. Doesn't work—the chemical in the erasable marker will cause the non-erasable part to bleed and smear.)

Another example would be to change a D to an L by removal of the upper, outer part of the curved section; thus the word you spell could be DEAL, and

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could lead up to a chosen card overprinted on the D (much like the Jaks Four Blacks and Elmsley What Card? effects of years ago).

Here's a chart of some of the ways letters can be changed into others by removing a part of their structure:

G to C	M to N
W to N	O to C
R to P	U to J
X to Y	Q to O, C, U
B, D, E, F, H, K, L, M, N, P, R, T, V, W to I	

(There are a number of other changes that can be done, depending on how the letters are formed; it would be impossible to list them all.)

BLAST-OFF

In this final variation, operating on exactly the same principle as the preceding, you show four numbered cards and do a 'countdown'—“Four, three, two, one—blast off!”—and on saying the final words you spread the cards to show a rocket or space shuttle taking off from the 4.

The first-shown 4 is made to change into a 1 by the removal of the diagonal and crossbar.

In all these variations the alteration is done very simply by wiping the card with the fingers of the holding hand while the upper surface of the other card is being shown. It is a very simple procedure.

Again, these are all intended as amusing interludes; do them in that context and I think you'll find them worthwhile.

SYMO-CHART

Like the items just described, this is intended as an amusing curiosity rather than a deep mystery.

EFFECT

After a brief introductory spiel about the powers of numerology as it relates to ESP, you remove from your pocket a small white card. On one side it says:

S Y M B O - C H A R T
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

—and on the other it has two rows of ESP symbols, thus:



You ask the spectator to think of a four-digit number (all digits different), and then to name any one of her chosen digits. She does so and, using her number, you count to one of the ESP symbols which, for example, proves to be a *star*.

You tell her to write down the remaining three digits—to reverse their order to make a new number and to subtract the smaller number from the larger—to reverse the digits again and add them to the number just obtained—and to announce the total, which in this case is 1089.

Handing her the card, you tell her to translate the four digits into letters as indicated; she does, and of course they spell out S-T-A-R....

METHOD

Well, with that '*for example*' and '*in this case*', I am being a bit facetious; the chosen design is *always* a star, and given the mathematical procedure described the spectator will always end up with 1089.

If you look at the two rows of symbols for a bit you will see that, depending on which side or end of the card is up, and whether you count from side to side or top to bottom, you can count any number from one to nine and always end up on a star.

This procedure is so simple that it will be obvious with a look at the chart; there are, in fact, often a couple of ways to get to the star using the same number.

Simple as it is, this counting passes muster because you do it very openly and at this point the spectator has no idea what's going to happen; she's still wondering what you're going to do with the other numbers she is thinking of...

...as a kicker you might pull a star card out of your pocket with the spectator's original number on it; or you might adapt the previously described *Windecks* (page 499) to an ESP deck.

(NOTE 1993: In using the 1089 force to reveal a word, it appears that I was anticipated by Stewart James, who created his *Secret Weapon* effect using this notion in 1941.¹¹)

¹¹See STEWART JAMES IN PRINT: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS, page 344.

QUINDARY

While the structure of the effect to be described is much like that in several effects in my *MINDSCRIPT 3*, the working is entirely different.

EFFECT

You show a deck of twenty-five word cards; all are different, a fact which is demonstrated as you give the cards a casual mixing.

Handing the deck to a spectator, you turn your back and have him give the cards a complete cut, and then deal off a card in turn to each of four spectators; he is to take the fifth card for himself and put the rest of the cards out of sight in his pocket.

Each spectator is asked to note the selected word on his or her card and then to hide it.

All this done, you turn to face the spectators. At this point you genuinely do not know the card held by any spectator—yet you now proceed to divine all five cards!

METHOD

First of all, the cards are stacked in a memorized arrangement; the mixing you give the deck is a Charlier or other casually appearing false shuffle.

Five particular cards appear in every fifth position—fifth, tenth, fifteenth, twentieth and twenty-fifth—and these are GIN, GRIN, GRAIN, GAINER and GRANITE.

When you are giving the spectator his instructions, you indicate how he is to deal a card to each spectator; as you do so you indicate the four spectators he will be working with, so you will know later who got the first card, second card, etc. If possible you pick a spectator at the end of a row of five and have him work with the other four spectators.

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The spectator follows the procedure as indicated. You turn around and ask the spectators to concentrate on their words. After a pause you frown, saying the impressions are too confusing; instead, they are to think only of the first letter. "Ah, much better," you say. *"I am getting some very definite impressions. Who's thinking of the letter G?"*

One of the spectators raises a hand. *"Excellent. Think of the other letters—there's an I, correct?"* The spectator agrees. *"The next letter—an R?"*

Note: you name the R rather than the N for this reason: if you said N the spectator would agree but you'd have no way of knowing if you'd named all the letters, the word being GIN, or if the spectator was thinking of a longer word. Here, if he says no, you know immediately that he is thinking of GIN. Better to miss one letter than not to know if the spectator is still concentrating...

...you continue in this fashion until either you make an error or you've named all seven letters; in either case you know the word...

...and, of course, since the deck is stacked, now that you know this spectator's word, you know the words chosen by the other four spectators and can divine them in any fashion you please.

In doing this series of divinations strive for variety—write the word itself on a slate in one case, in another you draw a picture; keep changing the approach to keep the spectators' interest up.

Do not, as a variation, show you've predicted one of the words (pocket index or whatever); this only beclouds such effects and often implies a force. Mentalism is already confusing enough to a lot of your audience; don't overload them.

Obviously, none of the other twenty word cards begins with the same letter as those of your five-card set. Some other possible sets to use:

HAT	PAN	PEA	TAP	SET
HEAT	PAIN	PALE	TRAP	NEST
HEART	PIANO	PETAL	TRAMP	ONSET
HEARTH	PISANO	PLANET	TAMPER	SONNET
HEATHER	PASSION	PLANTER	TEMPERA	CONSENT ¹²

RoTarot

Here we use a twenty-five-card stack of Tarot cards; in addition to the twenty-two titled cards of the Greater Arcana we have the King of Wands, Queen of Cups and Ace of Swords.¹³

The cards are stacked with the King of Wands, Emperor, Hermit, Hierophant and Magician five cards apart. The handling and presentation is as before up to the point you begin the divinations.

¹²In this set, as a variation, it is the last letter that remains constant.

¹³An idea of John Snider's. See *Superius* in his THE SECRETUM TAROTUS OF ARKAAN.

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Here, however, you ask the spectators to visualize their cards. "Yes," you say, "*I'm getting a very strong impression now—I see a powerful figure, a male, and he's holding something in his hand—the symbol of his authority—who's sending me that picture?*"

A spectator indicates that to be his thought, and you proceed to divine the card. A look at the cards named will indicate how to pump for the specific selection. You can, for example, note that he holds something in his left hand, true only of the Hierophant and Hermit cards. You can say he is seated on a throne; agreement eliminates the Magician and Hermit cards. Other details will suggest themselves to you as you look at the cards.

Using this procedure you can do a convincing divination which has no air of fishing about it; do remember that what you're doing is supposed to be a bit difficult.

As before, once you know the identity of one spectator's card, you know them all and can proceed with the divinations.

For other groupings which can be used here, see *Quintasense*, page 279.

GEMINIGHT

In recent years there have been a number of prediction effects involving tape recorders. Some have been worthwhile; some have had outlandish methods, some outlandish prices, and some have been outlandish in both price and method.

What follows is my approach to this effect. I will first describe one of the possible routines—then the method—and then indicate how the working can be applied to other effects.

EFFECT

A tape recorder sits on the table before you; *any* spectator names his or her sign of the zodiac and presses the play button. Your taped message reveals the chosen sign!

METHOD

Before describing the working, I should explain that what the spectator hears is a character reading for his or her sign of the zodiac; at some point during the reading the specified sign is named.

How do it know?

The general method is this:

The tape cassette recorder is of the portable kind, with a single speaker for use when it is not played through an external system; it is a stereo recorder and has been prepared so that only one of the two stereo tracks on the tape plays through the speaker at any given time. Which track plays is under the control of the performer.

The cassette tape itself is prepared by having the two tracks recorded separately, and with complete stereo separation.

On Track A are a dozen statements of a character analysis, taken from a fortunetelling book or a manuscript on cold reading; each of these statements takes, say, ten seconds of playing time.

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On Track B of the tape are statements naming the twelve signs of the Zodiac; these also are timed to run ten seconds each.

A sample statement might be:

These are some characteristics of your sun sign, which is Leo—others are...

These statements appear on Track B in their zodiacal order; thus if the spectator is born under the sign of *Gemini*, he turns on the tape recorder and hears two statements regarding his character. At this point you switch tracks and he hears his sun sign named; you switch back and he hears the other nine statements of the reading.

As to the precise preparation of recorder and tape to allow you to do this:

The recorder is, as mentioned above, a stereo recorder with a single speaker. It should have stereo output and input ports, and has a plastic rather than a metal case.

At an electronics store you purchase two reed switches; one of these is a 'make' and one is a 'break'—by which is meant that when a magnet is brought near them the first switch will close, completing a circuit; the second will open, breaking a circuit.

You remove the recorder from its plastic case and inspect the rear of the speaker; there will be four wires going to it, and they will usually be red and black pairs, the red ones being 'hot'. These hot wires are cut and the reed switches inserted, one on each wire.

This is very simple to do, but if you don't want to do it yourself, any audio repairman will probably do it for a small fee. In putting the recorder back into its plastic shell it is important to have the two reed switches resting against the bottom of the case; they should be taped in position.

Given this elementary preparation—if the tape recorder is set on the table and the play button pressed, only one of the two stereo tracks will be heard through the speaker. If, however, a magnet strapped to your knee is brought up under the table to a position directly underneath the reed switches on the recorder, the other stereo track will now be heard and will continue to play as long as the magnet is kept in position; removal of the magnet will cause the recorder to revert to the first track.

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Since the reed switches are on the bottom of the tape recorder at one end and the cassette holder is on top at the other, your under-the-table magnet won't get close enough to the tape to damage it. If the table is reasonably thin, a small magnet will be more than powerful enough to activate the reed switches; of course you will need to practice and experiment with the magnet to achieve the proper handling (or knee-ing).

Preparation of the cassette is a bit more troublesome, unless you have access to a recorder that allows for doing overdubbing. I originally accomplished this by recording one track on one recorder, and running it through a hi-fi system and into another recorder while recording the other track directly on the

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second recorder with a microphone—while listening to the first track on earphones plugged into that recorder! It took, as you'll appreciate, more than a few tries to get something usable.

A much simpler procedure, from one point of view, is to record all the statements for both tracks and take the tapes to a sound studio, telling them what you want. In the interests of secrecy, however, it is best if you can find a way to do this yourself—and with all the sound equipment currently available, this shouldn't be too difficult.

Given this methodology, there are a number of other things we can do with it:

Headlines

For this you have on Track A several 'general' types of predictions. On Track B, however, you can have something very specific—if, for example, several candidates are running in a primary election, you name each of them as the winner. After the election, when the tape is played, you have only to activate Track B at the proper time to predict the winner! A curious aspect of this is that the definiteness of this prediction will give the strong feeling that the other predictions will turn out eventually to be correct as well.

Foot(crystal)ball

On a day when several games are being played, you can predict the outcome of all of them in sequence; on Track A, of course, one team is the winner and on Track B the other...

Poker Phase

You shuffle a pack of cards, keeping the top stock of ten in position; a spectator cuts the pack and you cross the cut in the approved force fashion. You now bring out the tape and recorder and announce that you've made a prophecy.

You instruct the spectator to deal ten cards from the place he cut (!)—but now things get interesting; he is to divide the cards into two poker hands—give you one—and keep the other. He now plays the tape and it tells him who's holding which cards!

Of course you know the identities of the ten force cards—and taking the cards in order by suit and value, Track A names the card as being in your hand, while Track B names the same card as being retained by the spectator.

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Depending on the particular tape recorder you use for this effect, and the preparation of the tape cassette itself, there may be a slight audible click as the tracks switch back and forth. One thing that will help to eliminate this is to make sure your magnet creates a very positive switching action—so that the reed switches operate cleanly.

Another way to make the click less noticeable is to have a statement which precedes the actual prediction section, and which is common to both tape

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tracks. In recording this, turn the microphone off after each sentence and back on again—or stop and start the tape recorder. This will produce a similar click and get the spectators used to the sound.

A related way of doing this would be to have the predictions done in a mechanical, computer-like voice, with a number of sound effects *including clicks*.

An additional aspect of using a prefatory statement is that you can be standing or wandering around the room as the spectator begins to play the tape. Then, irresistibly drawn by the music of your own voice, you stroll over and take a seat just as the tape gets to the prediction section.

Related to this—you might consider having your manager, or a confederate, seated at the table. You never come near the table and your secret assistant handles the necessary business with the magnet.

(NOTE 1993: A high-tech variation would be to use an infra-red or FM signaller to switch tracks, activated from your pocket as you stroll about—but the whole idea of describing this is to suggest something you can actually set up without having a degree in electronics.)

There are really too many variations, given this method, to list:

You could have a spectator shuffle a packet of cards face up and face down and the prediction would tell which cards were face up and which were face down.

You could predict on the tape which combination of left and right turns would bring the spectator to the center of a chosen maze—or even one she'd drawn herself!

You could... well, you see what I mean....

CREDITS

In KORAN'S LEGACY¹⁴, Hugh Miller describes Al Koran's *Cassette Recorder Miracle* in which a reed switch is employed; in that effect the only function of the reed switch is to turn the recorder off. It may, however, have been the seed of *Geminight*.

¹⁴Page 91.

CROSS-REFERENCE

Janussum: see *Adamsmyth*—page 300
Alpharoah: see *Technical Concerns*—page 793
Handbook: see *Cashseer*—page 553
Quindary: see *Quintasense*—page 279
Geminight: see *Unknown Power*—page 28
Geminight: see *Tapinage*—page 297

CARDIAC

[1984]

IN THE INTRODUCTION to *DECKALOGUE* I briefly mentioned the tendency on the part of some mentalists to shy away from effects involving playing cards, feeling as they did that it might be thought they were doing card tricks rather than mental feats. I pointed out that every major mentalist of this century, from Dunninger to Maven, has used cards in his act.

There have been other discussions of this question, notably by Tony Shiels in *New Invocation*¹, and by Stephen Minch in Burt Sperber's *MIRACLES OF MY FRIENDS*²; but for the moment let's consider a quote from a layman.

He says:

"If _____ had told me that he did that trick by supernatural means I might have believed him."

The writer is Colin Wilson (in *THE GELLER PHENOMENON*), a prolific author on occult and other subjects; the performer he refers to is Randi; and the effect?

Paul Curry's *Out Of This World!*

Mind you, Wilson knew that Randi was doing tricks, the purpose being to discredit Uri Geller. Previously, Randi had done some spoon and nail bending, and also a duplication of a sealed drawing; this latter might well be considered classically pure mentalism. Yet...watching an admitted magician do what are admittedly tricks, what does this reasonably astute observer decide is the *one* thing that could have been done by supernatural means?

A card trick!

A great card trick to be sure, and certainly among the top half-dozen mental card feats—but still a card trick.

Indeed, it is so popular a trick that few mentalists now would think of using it, since it is performed by most magicians and many non-magicians.

Let's see what we can learn by analyzing its popularity.

First of all, while the effect is very strong, it is *believable*; a layperson can be persuaded that under the performer's influence he or she might be able to

¹No. 2; Dec. 1979; page 23.

²Page 110.

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sort the cards as claimed, particularly if in the presentation there are a few 'errors'. (If, on the other hand, the spectator thoroughly shuffled a pack and dealt it into four hands which proved to be the four suits in numerical order, no one would be likely to believe it genuine psychic influence.)

Secondly, the action is accomplished by the spectator, not the mentalist—so the spectator knows with certainty that the procedure is fair.

Third—it is accomplished in the spectator's hands, so the spectator knows the *performer* isn't cheating.

Fourth—(in this specific but not all cases related to the Third) there is clearly no sleight-of-hand, no manipulation taking place.

Certainly these four points do not have to be considered as *requirements* for effective card mentalism—but if you think about the strongest work in this area you've seen performed by the leading lights in mentalism, you will note that it follows most and often all of these points.

Sometimes, of course, one aspect will be strong enough to offset the loss of another. In doing the optical fan force the performer does hold the cards, to be sure—but this is counter-balanced by the point that the spectator simply thinks of a card rather than physically choosing one. From the spectator's point of view there is no way that sleight-of-hand could assist you in revealing a thought existing only in his mind.

I strongly recommend that you read THE PSYCHIC FEATS OF OLOF JONSSON by Brad Steiger³. It is a thorough examination, from a journalistic but nonskeptical point of view, of a man widely believed to have genuine psychic abilities, a reputation earned in large part with tests using playing cards.

Since, as mentalists, we are working in a different context from Jonsson—stressing the entertainment aspect rather than the supposed genuineness—much in his approach is not directly useful. The book is still worth reading, if only to show how easily people will accept as a genuine psychic miracle something which is quite clearly a card trick.

(After you've read it you might want to check Al Mann's THE THIRD ECSTASY, a section of which is devoted to Mann's hypotheses of how Jonsson might have accomplished the various tests.)

524 | And so, speaking of psychic miracles, we come to the material in this section...!

Nothing herein requires sleight-of-hand; do not be deceived by this fact into thinking this stuff is at all easy. It is not. With the exception of the 'stop' effect, it requires extensive brainwork—or precise handling—or both. These aren't 'card items' that you will learn this evening and start doing tomorrow, or even next week. They will take a good deal of work to be performed competently, and a great deal to be performed well.

³Prentice-Hall: 1971; Popular Library paperback: 1973.

CARDIAC T

They are conceived as feature effects, as was my *TRIONIC* routine, and are to be the only thing you do with cards in a given act. You can point up various aspects of the effects—with the *Pierception* stabbing routine you could stress the 'challenge' aspects of the presentation—sealed deck you've never seen, etc.—to take just one example.

Again—these effects will require work, and thought; I think you'll find they're worth it.

PIERCEPTION

As just mentioned, this is most effectively presented as a 'challenge' demonstration, and that is the way I will describe it here.

EFFECT

You explain to the audience that before the show began you spoke to a spectator; that spectator is asked to stand.

This person, you explain, was asked to think of a card, to keep it in mind and reveal its identity to no one. The spectator verifies that she is thinking of a card and that it is known to no one but her.

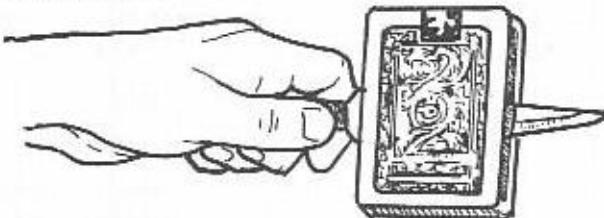
You now tell the audience that you spoke to some one else (let us say the president of the sponsoring organization) some days ago; at that time you requested that a deck of playing cards be purchased and brought here this evening.

The president of the club is introduced by you and brings out the deck of cards. You point out that the cards are still sealed in their cellophane wrapping and you stress the impossibility of anyone tampering with them.

Taking the deck, you ask the lady standing in the audience to concentrate on the card known only to herself.

You show an ornate thin-bladed dagger.

After a pause, you slowly push the blade through the cellophane and the box itself and into the deck; The knife goes in one of the narrow sides of the box and out the other, passing between two cards.



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The whole array is handed to the president to hold; only now do you ask the lady in the audience to reveal her thought-of card. She does so.

The president is instructed to tear away the wrapping and box and to carefully separate the deck at the point where the blade has entered.

He does so...and the card next to the knife-blade is the lady's mentally selected card.

METHOD

Stripped of all the hoopla this is just another card-stabbing trick—but the particular *kind* of hoopla we use in this presentation makes it seem like a whole lot more than that.

The method divides itself into two parts—how do you know what card the lady is thinking of? And how do you stab to that card in a deck you've never seen before?

The answer to the first of these questions is hardly a surprising one: when you speak to the lady before the show, you ask her to think of a card, and for this purpose she chooses one from your rough-and-smooth forcing pack. She is asked to keep it in mind.⁴

The second part is almost as simple to explain, but somewhat more difficult to do.

In setting up the purchase of the deck in your phone call to the president of the club, you specify the brand and type of deck to be used. Since all of the cards of a given brand and type will be packed in the same order, you are aware of that order.

Given that, you also know what card will be in the *exact center* of the pack—and that is the card you force.

If, then, you grip the cards in the wrapped case firmly in your hand and stab through the exact center of the outer long thin side of the case, it will end up next to the center card.

It is this card, needless to say, that you force with the rough-and-smooth pack on the first spectator.

As to how you always stab at the exact center of the deck—first of all, you practice. You will find that it is easier to stab at the precise center than at other positions—and also, surprisingly, that it is often easier to do this with the deck in the case than out of it.

Secondly—depending on the kind of cards you use, you may well be able to find a specific detail in the printing on the side of the case that you can use as a guide for the stabbing. This detail may not be at position twenty-six, in fact, but if repeated tests show it always puts you next to the same card—it doesn't matter; obviously that's the card you force.

⁴This concept comes from Phil Goldstein's *Four-Sided Triangle* in his RED Book Of MENTALISM, page 5. You are strongly advised to look it up for Phil's brilliant dialogue used in 'setting' the spectator for the selection and later revelation.

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The parts here are simple, if not necessarily easy; I think you will find that they sum up to a whole that can with proper presentation be great indeed.

NOTES

As specified in the effect description, you use a *thin-bladed* knife; it makes the correct stabbing much more certain.

You can, if you wish, borrow the knife—as long as it fits the above requirement—and add still more hoopla to point out that detail.

Also with the knife—as a presentational grace note you might have the lady hold the blade between her hands for a moment, so that the knife can absorb the psychometric vibrations of her thought.

You might wish to make up a list of the twenty-sixth cards in the new-deck orders of the popular brands of cards. That way, if the president or other dignitary who makes the purchase should screw up and bring you the wrong kind of deck (and you should always check on this *before* the show and before you have the lady select her card), you can use a sleight-of-hand force for the lady and carry on as usual. If the deck isn't on your list it would be wise to have in mind a good effect that can be done with an ordinary pack.

Covering all bases here—if you don't have the opportunity to check the deck beforehand, call on the dignitary *first*. If he comes up with the right deck all is well and you have the lady in the audience stand up. If it *isn't* the right deck, or if the seal is broken, you do some other effect with it—and later on in the show have the lady stand up; you then reveal her thought-of card in an apparently impromptu fashion: *"You've been thinking of a card all evening, haven't you? I thought so... well, keep thinking of it and I'll try to..."* and so forth.

If you don't wish to do two card effects in the same program, you could simply use the dignitary's deck to force on him the same card as the lady is thinking of—here I'd recommend an out-of-the-hands force—and alter your presentation accordingly.

CREDITS

The handling of the card selection is, as noted, Phil Goldstein's. Stabbing to the twenty-sixth card in a pack has been an aspect of effects devised by Al Koran⁵, Tony Griffith⁶ and Alex Elmsley⁷, among others.

⁵See Koran's *Miracle Card Stab* in Koran and Lamonte's *MASTERED AMAZEMENT*, page 47.

⁶See *A Question Of Coincidence* in *GRIFF ON CARDS*, page 12.

⁷Which he taught me in 1959.

ATTAPLOY

What follows here is an interesting and visual version of the classic 'mental stop' effect—but not, in my opinion, one to stand by itself. I would suggest rather that it be used as a kicker to a previous effect. Let us say that you have done, by any of the many methods available, the stop effect where a spectator deals cards into your hand and stops at any point, only to find the card stopped at matches a previously shown card in your wallet. At this point you proceed naturally with this—

EFFECT

As a further proof of your ability to influence the spectator, you have him initial the card with a marking pen and then you shuffle it back into the deck.

You drop the deck into your side jacket pocket and explain that you are going to take cards one at a time from that pocket and place them in your upper breast (handkerchief) pocket. Suiting the action to the word you do this with several cards, and instruct the spectator that at any time while you are holding a card he is to stop you.

At some point the spectator calls out stop; he is given the option of changing his mind and having you continue, but when he is finally satisfied you turn around the card you are holding.

It is, of course, the initialed selected card.

METHOD

This is a direct adaptation of an apparatus effect which has been on the market for near half a century; the effect, still marketed and manufactured by Abbott's, is called Attaboy.

The Attaboy apparatus takes the form of a silk-screened plywood cutout of a bellboy; he holds a wooden houlette, and another such houlette rests at his feet.

CARDIACI

Cards are transferred from the lower houlette to the upper one, and whenever the performer is halted he holds the chosen card.

This is accomplished, simply enough, by a slide which runs down the rear of the cutout to the lower houlette. A few cards are taken from the rear of the deck in the lower houlette and placed in the front part of the upper houlette as the procedure is explained. Then the chosen card is taken, but it goes into the slide and drops down to the bottom houlette, where it is again taken from the rear of the cards therein. The procedure is repeated until the spectator calls stop, at which point the card is shown.

A very pretty effect, and one that has seen service in programs of a number of magicians over the years. It has not, however, been performed by mentalists—for the obvious reason that the apparatus looks like precisely what it is—a magic prop.

By using the two pockets of the jacket we can get exactly the same effect in a far more natural seeming way.

In the handkerchief pocket is the upper end of a slide; the lower end of this slide feeds into the side jacket pocket. Thus a card taken from this lower pocket and placed into the upper one and into the slide will immediately return to the lower pocket to be taken out again.

The slide is basically a flattened tube slightly wider than a card and about an eighth of an inch from front to back; its length depends on the distance

from a few inches below the top of the handkerchief pocket to an inch below the top of the side jacket pocket; this will almost always be less than fifteen or so inches.

It really doesn't matter what the tube is made of as long as it is semi-rigid—in normal use it must not easily collapse, crush or buckle. One way to make the tube is to get a sheet of flexible but heavy-duty plastic, and fold it tightly around a stick of wood which has the same dimensions as the interior of the tube. Fasten the plastic in place and put it in hot water for a while. When the plastic dries and the wood is removed you should have a semi-rigid plastic tube of the proper dimensions.

One further addition is to glue the male half of a snap fastener to the rear of the tube at one end; the female part of this snap is sewn in position on the rear side of the handkerchief pocket. In



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this way the tube can be snapped into position and will stay there but can be removed when the jacket is to be cleaned.

You can make the required slits in the pockets yourself, but it might be better to have a seamstress or tailor do it. The slit in the handkerchief pocket should be through the rear wall at least two inches above the bottom of the pocket (so other items placed in the pocket won't fall through); the slit in the side jacket pocket should be right at the top edge of the rear wall.

With the jacket prepared as described, the working of the effect should be fairly clear. After the card has been initialed and returned to the deck, you control it to the top and drop the deck in your side pocket back outward. As you explain what you are going to do you take a few cards from the *face* of the deck and put them into the handkerchief pocket proper (you may wish to have some extra cards already in this pocket to be removed at the conclusion of the effect; note that these might be a very specific group of cards needed for a subsequent routine).

This illustrating of the action concluded, you take the top card (the spectator's initialed card) from the lower pocket and put it in the upper one, actually into the slide. It returns to the lower pocket where it is again extracted—and the procedure is repeated until the spectator stops you, whereupon you show him you hold his selected card.

Again I stress that this is merely an adaptation—but since it is an adaptation that may spell the difference between being able to perform the effect or not, I think it is worthwhile.

NOTES

While I've described this with playing cards, an interesting routine could be worked out with a group of business cards collected from the audience. One spectator is chosen and is able to find the business card just handed to you—his or her own.

Given the slide setup as described, you are also prepared to do the version of the Medallion effect described in KORAN'S LEGACY by Hugh Miller⁸. You could in fact do the Medallion effect first and later on the *Attaploy* routine.

CREDITS

532 | Attaboy was invented by Jack Hughes.

⁸Page 37.

HALLMARK

There have many attempts to create the ultimate card divination. These efforts have had their advantages and their drawbacks. I will not presume that in this approach to the problem I have achieved perfection; for my own purposes, however, it'll do until perfection comes along.

EFFECT

From its case you remove a pack of cards, and spread it to show the cards are arranged in new deck order. In doing this you are demonstrating without having to say it that the deck is a complete one.

You hand the deck to a spectator and instruct her to shuffle it thoroughly, in any manner she likes. When she has done this you turn your back for a moment. You tell her to spread the cards faces toward her and simply to *think of any card she sees*.

This done, she is to square up the pack and drop it back into its case, after which you turn back to face her.

It would be difficult to imagine how the conditions could be any fairer, or the procedure any more straightforward, than as here described.

Yet—in spite of these conditions—you proceed to name the thought-of card.

METHOD

We use two basic principles here—limited choice and elimination.

The deck is, as stated, a complete one; the spectator's choice, however, is limited to:

- the Six, Nine and King of Hearts
- the Seven and Jack of Clubs
- the Ace and Two of Diamonds
- the Three, Five and Queen of Spades

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To achieve this limitation you spray (lightly) the backs and faces of all other cards, and the *backs only* of the above-named cards, with a light solution of roughing fluid. You may also wish to prepare the faces of the named cards with a fanning powder or slicking wax. If the deck is reasonably new this latter preparation will probably not be necessary.

With the deck prepared in this fashion, it may be well shuffled by the spectator; when she turns it toward herself and spreads it, however, the only card she will see—with the possible exception of the face card of the deck, which you may instruct her to avoid as too obvious—will be the above-named card.

This will not appear at all unusual—when you spread a deck of cards in your hands in this fashion you will rarely see more than ten or a dozen cards.

Thus the spectator is limited to the ten cards listed above, and now you have to discern which of those it is. We accomplish this by the same means (and using, in fact, the same cards) as described in *TRIONIC*; please refer to page 76 for the pumping technique.

Thus the card is divined, and in performing this divination you have followed the same procedure you might follow if you were genuinely psychic.

The part of this that needs practice is the elimination sequence; in the *TRIONIC* write-up, I have tried to cover it in exhaustive detail, but it is something you will have to do over and over again to bring it to its most convincing level.

NOTE

Since the deck is complete and its preparation is not likely to be discerned by anyone, it could be used for subsequent effects; I will state as my very strong opinion the thesis that there aren't all that many effects that could follow this one, properly performed.

If you're going to learn the pumping sequence, you really ought to learn the full *TRIONIC* routine if you have not yet done so.

CREDITS

The concept of preparing a deck so that only a limited number of cards will show is believed to be the origination of Trevor Hall, and is described by him in his book *NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE*⁹.

⁹Page 56, where it was employed as one part of an ingenious effect involving a deck of Lexicon™ cards.

DISPOSITION

The effect of a named card appearing at a named position in the deck has been popular for a long time. In *Imposition* (page 209) I describe one solution I had devised for this problem; it involved the assistance of a stooge. In what follows no stooge or secret confederacy is employed.

EFFECT

You place a cased deck of cards on the table and discuss coincidence, synchronicity or whatever else amuses you. Inviting two spectators to take part, you ask them to verify that you have never before spoken to them and have made no secret arrangement with either of them.

This made clear, you ask one of them to name a playing card; this done, the other is instructed to name a number from one to fifty-two. He does so.

You remove the deck of cards from its case and put it on the table. That's *all* you do, and you do *not* secretly move a card from one position to another.

Yet—when either of the spectators deals the pack to the named number—the card at that position is the one specified by the spectator.

METHOD

Sound interesting?

As I just said, you don't move the card—what you move is the *position*, relatively speaking. How do you do that?

By using not one, but *two* decks of cards...

...it is a little known fact that decks of cards are readily available which are *much* thinner than usual. These decks are almost always foreign-made and are either of a plastic-coated variety or thin two-ply cards; one such deck is manufactured by Ton

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Onosaka's Magic Land company. Also currently available are thin cards sold for split-fan productions; too, Neil Lester (Cards By Martin) can provide such decks.

Two of these decks, arranged top to face in sequence from Ace to King and with Hearts-Clubs-Diamonds-Spades suit order, can be put into a standard playing card case without much difficulty (more on this presently).

It will be readily seen that, given this situation, any card can be named, and any position—and it will be possible to take from the deck *a continuous run of fifty-two cards with the named card at the named position*.

We will consider niceties of handling in a moment; for now let us look at just what happens when the card and number are named, the two decks stacked in sequence in the case.

As an example let us pick the Ten of Hearts and the number forty.

If the Ten of Hearts is to be at the fortieth position, then clearly thirty-nine cards have to be on one side of it and twelve on the other. Given our stack as described we can't use the Ten of Hearts in the set at the top of the pack because only nine cards are above it.

If we look at the Ten of Hearts near the center of the double pack, however, it is easy to see that twelve cards below it is the Nine of Clubs.

Thus—if we remove from the case a run of fifty-two cards with the Nine of Clubs at the face, the Ten of Hearts will be at the fortieth position from the top.

And how do we know what the top card of the pack should be, in order to give us fifty-two?

Simple. What we're doing here is, in a way, cutting the deck by selection from a larger group rather than by physically transposing the two sections—but the results are the same. If we had but one deck set up as specified, and we cut it so the Nine of Clubs was the face card, what would be the top card of the deck? Naturally, the Ten of Clubs. It's the same here.

Let's take another example:

The card named is the Jack of Diamonds and the number is nineteen.

The Jack of Diamonds is the eleventh card in its suit; thus we must add eight more cards from the Club suit above it—thus the top card of the deck will be the Six of Clubs and the face card will be the preceding card in the sequence, i.e., the Five of Clubs.

This may sound a bit complicated as you read it, but if you will get out a couple of packs and arrange them as described, one on top of the other, you will see that it isn't all that difficult. It's not easy—it does require a bit of concentration, particularly as you have to talk and otherwise perform as you do it—but it can be accomplished without trouble, given the proper amount of thought and practice.

Now let's consider some of the fine points:

CARDIAC

Though you know the general location of each card in the deck—and the specific location after a moment's thought—you might want to paste a cue-list on the back of the card case; it is not strictly necessary but might be useful.

Still with the card case, two other suggestions:



Place a thin wedge in the bottom of the case (this can be nothing more complex than a piece of folded card). With this wedge in position the deck will be raised *slightly* out of the top of the case, and the upper edge of the deck will have a bevel, making it easier for you to riffle through the cards.

Also—depending on the decks you use—it may be necessary to enlarge the case slightly. It is not at all difficult to pull the case carefully apart, mold it around the double-deck and glue it back together. This alteration will not be noticeable if done neatly.

As to the cards themselves:

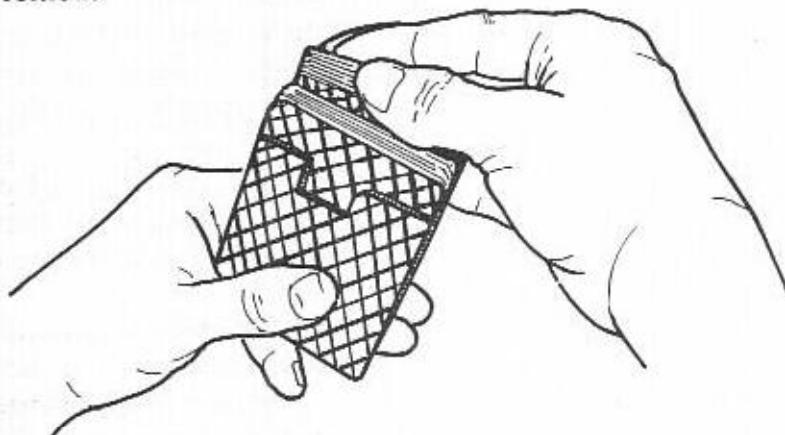
All the *Aces* and *Sevens* are trimmed slightly short. Given this preparation you will find that most often you can riffle to the proper face card of the deck (or *what will be* the face card, when you take the deck out) without having to look at the cards.

You may also wish to edge-mark the cards at the upper end; while like the cue-list this is not strictly necessary it may prove helpful. Please note that it will hardly be necessary to mark *all* the cards.

As to the actual removal of the cards from the case:

You pick up the cased deck so that about an inch of the bottom of the deck projects from beneath your hand; in this way the upper end of the deck will be hidden. The flap is opened (it is on the side of the case nearest the hand) and will project slightly above the edge of your hand.

You pull the entire double deck up about a quarter of an inch and then exert pressure with the hand holding the cards to keep them momentarily in this position.



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You riffle, using the short cards as helpers in calculation, to the card that will be the face card. When you have reached it, the hand doing the riffle holds the remainder of the cards in position while the grip through the case is allowed to relax long enough for the cards in front of the stopped at card to drop back down into the case.

The deck is re-gripped by the holding hand and you riffle to what will be the top card of the deck; as soon as it passes your thumb you push all the cards above it down slightly; your thumb now moves back to the (new) face of the deck and all the projecting cards are removed from the case.

Please note that in doing this you do not—and should not—riffle through *all* the cards. You know approximately where your face card is, and the most you should have to do is riffle from the nearest short card below it—a half-dozen cards at most. This riffling must be done with a light touch to avoid any telltale noise.

Once you have the face card, you know the top card will of course be fifty-one cards above it; you estimate that point and start your riffle a few cards below the projected position.

As I pointed out in the introductory comments to this section, this kind of effect is simple—but not easy. It will require practice to do cleanly and without your thought processes showing.

You employ a very simple misdirection of the classic kind as you remove the cards from the case. You hold the deck up in a prominent display, saying, "...fifty-two cards, and fifty-two possible positions," or something a bit more profound; during this time your other hand, holding the case, drops unobtrusively to the side. It stays there until *after* the spectator begins the count-and-deal; only then do you drop the case into your pocket.

A word, here, about cards and paranoia:

Most of us have handled cards all our lives. We know what a deck feels like, and can generally notice if even a few cards have been added on or subtracted from a deck. We know how thick a pack of cards should be.

Laypersons are not like that; they don't know what a deck properly feels like. I've had the experience of handing a deck out for shuffling, and then realizing that a dozen cards from the pack were still in my pocket—but the spectator didn't notice anything at all unusual about the cards.

In this routine the only really peculiar thing is that you take a deck of cards out of a case twice its thickness—but the people watching don't have a chance to compare them, and are not going to assume that all cards are cased with equal exactness.

From the spectator's point of view, you have a deck of cards in a case on the table; later, when he is dealing, he notes that there are in fact fifty-two cards, the proper number—so he really has no reason to be suspicious. Don't shy away from this effect because *you* would be....

CARDIAC

Given the arrangement of the cards—you can say, at the beginning of the presentation, that you looked through the cards as they sat in new deck order, and then gave them one cut to bring a particular card to a specific position.

I should say that I do not use this sequential setup; my double deck is stacked in a memorized order for use in a subsequent effect. If you use a memorized pack it requires a very simple calculation to know what the necessary face card should be—and for some of you this random appearance of a memorized pack may be a plus for this routine.

(I do not recommend shuffling one of the decks, stacking the other in identical order, and then making a cue-list; I believe it would be just too difficult to work with such a list in anything like a convincing fashion.)

You will note that, having concluded this effect you're left with a deck containing eight short cards, which may be of use in a subsequent routine.

If you really want to be cutesy, you can have another card case in your pocket; this one, need I say, is empty and will only take one deck. At the conclusion you bring it out and replace the cards in it without comment. If you decide to do this, pick a case design where the two sizes will not be *too* different in appearance. Here again, though, note that the spectators see the case for a few seconds at the beginning of the effect and it is then out of sight until the end—and no real attention is directed toward it anyway—so the difference would have to be quite blatant for anyone to notice it.

One final note—a matter of personal opinion:

You know now that you can in fact cause any card to appear at any number—but don't hit the audience over the head with it. To them the effect is that you somehow managed to perceive that a card would be at a number; this is miracle enough. If you go into the "...are you satisfied? Would you like to change your mind? You're sure?" business beloved of magicians, I think it turns it into a card trick. When they name the card, look relieved, and when they name the number, even more so. That makes it real.

(NOTE 1993: An interesting new variant of this effect is Ken Krenzel's *Open And Shut Case* in his CLOSE-UP IMPACT!¹⁰, written by Stephen Minch.)

CREDITS

I had toyed with the idea of ultra-thin decks for some time, but it wasn't until I saw Phil Goldstein do his brilliant version of the 'Fred' trick¹¹ that I got on the train of thought arriving here. The general effect of card-at-number is an old one, with a genealogy too cloudy to reference precisely here.

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¹⁰Page 71.

¹¹Unreleased when *Disposition* was originally published but later described in Phil's Mix '86 lecture notes; see *Final Fred*.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

See listing at end of *DECKALOGUE* section—page 236

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[1984]

HERE, AS WITH *PSYCHL*, *OCTASM* and the next section, *SPYRYT*, I'm describing items originally intended to be marketed separately. Indeed, one of the items—*Clockout*—has, since its original publication, been manufactured by Ton Onosaka of Japan's Magic Land. As it is easy to make up in satisfactory fashion, I'm including it here.

In an earlier section I mentioned my aversion to the kind of self-aggrandizement in descriptions common in writings on magic and mentalism. It has been brought home to me rather forcibly in recent times just how unwise this stance is in terms of marketing...

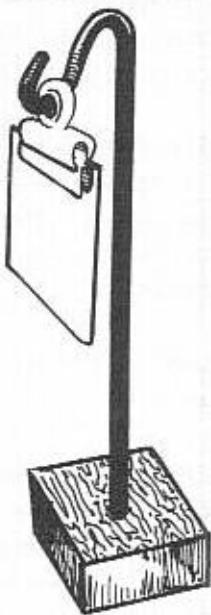
...but at this point I am too old to change. My regular readers don't seem to require such puffery (or they wouldn't be regular readers!), and such people as do will have to wait until they see the material performed. If that sounds grumpy, so be it.

FLAMULET

Based on a classic mental presentation, this effect has a certain, ah, charm...

EFFECT

You talk about the ancient belief that certain special objects had innate powers for protection or for destruction—objects called amulets, talismans, phylacteries, apotropaions—a belief still held by the majority of the world's population. Is there anything to such beliefs? You propose an experiment to find out.



On your table are five simple stands like the one illustrated on the left. Each stand consists of a ten-inch metal rod coming up from a wooden block; the rods are bent into hooks at the top, and from each of these hooks, by means of a bulldog clip, hangs a manila pay envelope.

You explain that one of these envelopes is under the protection of the *Amulet Of Faust*; this amulet, you further explain, has the property of protection against fire.

Various spectators nominate four of the envelopes, and you set fire to them; they are reduced to ashes. The immolation concluded, you reveal that the amulet has protected the remaining envelope—and the proof of that is simple; the amulet is in the envelope.

Very fairly you remove the envelope from the clip and tear off one end. From the interior of the envelope you pour out the amulet, which is a metal disc showing a picture of the sorcerer Faust.

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To conclude, you give the amulet to one of the spectators as a keepsake—pointing out that it's been through such a severe test that it has probably lost all protective powers—so she had better not play with fire...!

METHOD

As many of my readers will know, the presentational angle of this glorified *Bank Night* is Fogel's; the original version, marketed over two decades ago, was called *Fantasy In Flame*. A later version, using the same general approach but with a different methodology, was marketed by Supreme as *Technicolour Chance*.

Some time before the first version came out, James Herpick had marketed a set of tongs in which to burn a billet; the operative principle was that the center-fold section of the billet, held between the 'gripper-pads' of the tongs, would not burn.

In Fogel's application of this principle, a bill folded into a small rectangular package was placed in one end of the envelope; this end was put between the jaws of a bulldog clip so that the part containing the bill was completely concealed. Obviously, with five envelopes so prepared, any four could be burned—the unburnt portion containing the bill safely hidden within the jaws of the clip—and the final envelope could be very fairly opened to show its bill.

Fogel was not completely happy with this, and came up with an alternative handling where the bill—one only being used—was loaded in and then apparently extracted. This too was unsatisfactory since the 'move' came at precisely the time it would be suspected.

In the course of a Magic Castle lecture Fogel mentioned that he had encountered a number of spectators who had reasoned out the method of the original version. To counter this he had noted down the serial number of the bill on a blackboard on display; needless to say, the numbers on the five bills were in a consecutive series, and made identical by the erasure of the final digit.

This, too, was far from satisfactory, since in trying to prove that something *wasn't* being done it tended to suggest that it *was*.

Enough history.

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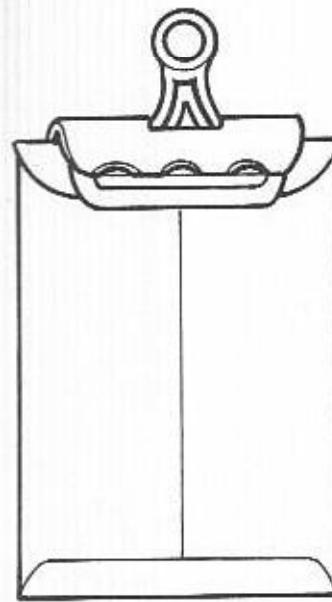
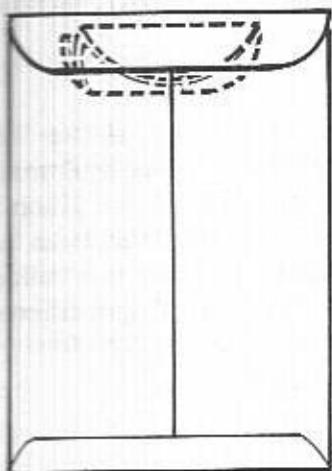
When I went to work on this problem, I decided the basic concept was fine—the difficulty was simply that astute spectators would realize that a bill could be folded up small so that it could fit in the clip—so the obvious answer to that was to use something too big to be hidden that way, something that couldn't be folded... like a metal disc... or a coin...

...yeah, yeah, all this blather has been to tell you that you use five *Folding Coins*...

...but that's not the best part. The best part is that because you use the amulet presentation you do not bother with getting five pricey folding half-

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dollars; you use the cheapo S.S. Adams folding coin (you can probably pick these up used at a magic swap meet or from a second-hand dealer's list). These coins pass off very well as amulets.



You fold up the coins, stick them in the envelopes, and tuck them away in the jaws of the bulldog clips. (You should use the smallest clips and envelopes that will fully conceal the folded coin.) In your pocket is a duplicate solid coin.

The presentation is fairly straightforward. You burn up the four chosen envelopes as indicated above; other than that you have nothing to do, really, until it comes time to show the amulet in the final envelope.

Here you must make a point of your hands being quite empty, without being too obvious about it. This done, you take the envelope by the bottom third in one hand while the other hand releases the clip. (If you didn't do this, spectators would see a little chunky movement as the coin fell to the bottom of the envelope.)

Carefully tear off the top end of the envelope, discard this strip and let the envelope buckle open; if the coin has not previously unfolded fully it will do so now.

Tilt the envelope toward the spectators so they can see the coin-amulet within. You spill it out onto the palm of your hand. As you talk your other hand crumples the envelope and puts it in your pocket, where you obtain in a fingerpalm the solid coin.

The other coin has been on display on the palm of your hand as you talk; now you approach a spectator and apparently pick up the coin from your palm and hand it to her. Actually, of course, you simply push the coin into

view from the fingerpalm and let the hand containing the folding coin drop to your side. (For sake of logic the person you present with the amulet should be on the opposite side from the hand displaying the coin, so there is a reason for it to be taken in the other hand.)

There is no reason for the spectators to be looking for a switch at this point since the effect is apparently over.

The folding coin can be disposed of in putting away the matches and clip stands used in the presentation.

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NOTE

Make sure you also dispose of the torn-off section, because this may retain impression of the folded coin.

CREDITS

Fogel was the major inspiration, as indicated in the text above. The methodology I've employed in this version may have been inspired by Frank V. Taylor's coin production from a clothespin, described by Bruce Elliott *Phoenix*¹ and *MAGIC AS A HOBBY*². Some time after I developed this I was told of a commercial effect where a folding coin was made to appear in a bulldog clip; this seems a bit obvious to me, but I suppose it may not be all that different from, say, a coin wand to a layperson.

¹No. 22; Nov. 13, 1942; page 91.

²Page 92.

CLOCKOUT

This item, which as I mentioned in the introductory notes has been manufactured by Ton Onosaka of Japan's Magic Land, is a very straightforward and visually interesting way of doing a prediction.

EFFECT

You show a dozen small cards (playing card size or a bit larger); on each of these is a clock face, and each of the twelve faces bears a different time—there are no duplicates.

You also show a larger card which, you explain, bears your prediction, and set it out on display.

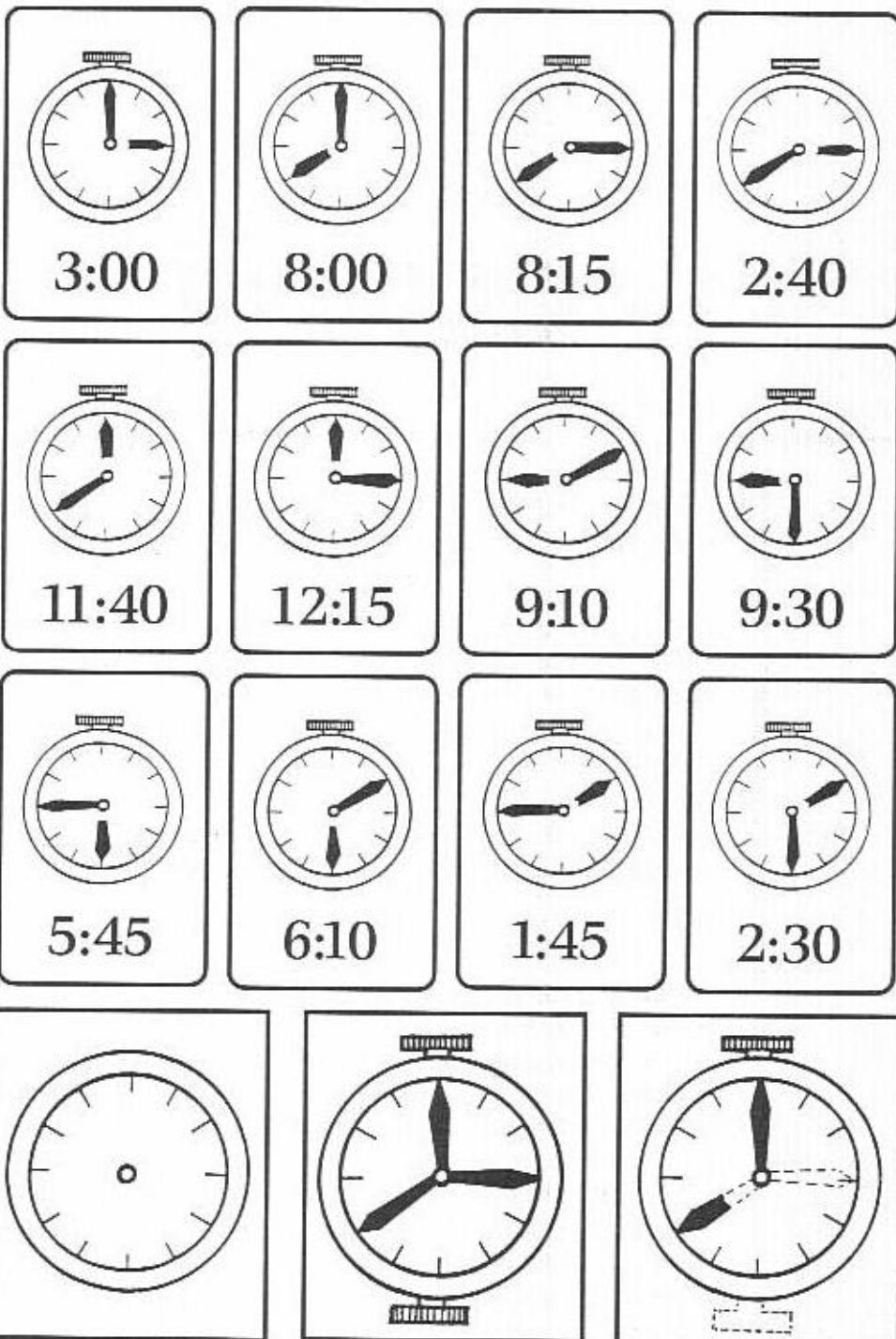
Any spectator freely chooses one of the twelve times indicated—this choice may be altered if desired—but whatever the final choice, when you show your prediction it is an exact match!

METHOD

The twelve different clock faces are shown on the next page; you will note that the clock faces do not bear any numbers but that the time, in addition to being indicated by the clock hands, is noted numerically below the face. Two other points of interest are the 'knob' which establishes the top of the clock and the indication of the hour hand being made by a shortening of its inner end (not outer) which clearly differentiates the two hands.

Your prediction card is made with a five-by-eight-inch piece of white bristol board. Cover the face of the card with clear adhesive plastic (the kind sold for laminating licenses, etc.). Over this draw a circle with central dot and twelve hour division lines; this is done with an erasable magic marker. Put another sheet of clear adhesive plastic over the first; then draw in the three hands and two 'knobs' as shown in the illustration.

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PREDICTION BOARD:
First draw a simple
clock face and cover it
with clear laminate.

Next add two knobs
and three hands,

By erasing one knob
and parts of hands
you can make any of the
twelve times, e.g., 8:00.

MYND

The prediction card is prepared in the way described so both the permanent and erasable parts of the prediction will look the same.

As you will note, a sweep of the thumb will easily erase parts of the prediction—and by erasing one of the hands, one of the knobs, and the inner end of one of the two remaining hands, you can match any one of the twelve different clock faces. This can be done very easily in a few seconds as you talk to the spectators.

Example: The spectator chooses eight o'clock.

You turn the card so that the arrow which points to the half-circle knob is pointing up—in other words, the twelve o'clock position.

With a sweep of your thumb you wipe off the hand which is now pointing to the three o'clock position. Continuing down, your thumb erases the knob at what is now the bottom of the dial. Moving back up and slightly over, your thumb wipes a short section from the inner end of the eight o'clock hand (thus establishing that as the hour hand) and your work is complete.

Since the spectator's selection is completely free, you can simply have the person remain seated (always the preferable procedure when possible) and make the selection from there as you display the cards. Done this way, you don't even have to think about just how to erase the prediction to match the time chosen, since you've got the example to work from right there in your hand. You simply erase the prediction until it matches.

In those cases when you have to turn the prediction card around so that the correct end is up, you will of course do this in as unobtrusive a manner as possible.

When displaying your prediction and the spectator's card, do so by holding them at the bottom (one in each hand). Your fingers will then cover the numerals at the bottom of the spectator's card; while this is not absolutely necessary, it makes a better visual impression. (It also prevents the spectators from wondering why your prediction card didn't have the numbers written on the bottom as well.)

NOTES

The model designed by Ton Onosaka uses a special prediction card and marker, along with a nicely designed set of clock-cards. You may find it simpler to obtain one of these Clockout sets rather than go to the trouble of making one up yourself.

The presentation may take a number of forms, of which perhaps the most obvious is to say that your prediction notes the time of day you were born—clearly an important time for you—and you wonder if the spectator will be able to get an impression of which time it was.

Some of you may possess Trevor Lewis' ingenious *Para-Dice Prediction*³ with a dozen cards, each with a pair of dice shown, where you predict the selected

³Described in Phil Willmarth's TREVOR LEWIS CLOSE UP, page 45.

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pair of dice. Since its general presentation is near-identical to *Clockout*, but it works by an entirely different method, it would be an ideal alternative for the second show of the night.

CREDITS

A prime inspiration for this effect was Ned Rutledge's **Time And Money**; here I've tried to remove some of the ambiguities and increase the possible choices. The deletion of parts of a prediction to match a choice is Bill Simon's, and will be found in his **MATHEMATICAL MAGIC**⁴. Yet another approach to this methodology will be found in *Choption* on page 321.

⁴Page 31.

CASHSEER

This divination effect can be presented either as telepathy or clairvoyance. Concerning as it does a box of money, it will fit nicely into the popular 'psychic detective' kind of presentation.

EFFECT

A spectator's attention is directed to a small wooden box on a table; he is asked to open it and look inside, and tell the audience what he sees. 'Money,' he says.

"There are, in fact, several rolls of bills in there, are there not?" you ask. The spectator confirms this.

Turning your back, you tell him that he is to act the part of a thief; he can take one, two—any or all of the rolls of bills—and put them in a small plastic baggie which he then tucks away in a pocket. When done he closes the box.

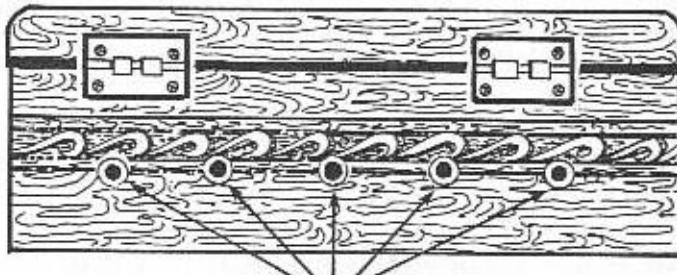
This all seems quite fair—yet you immediately know how much money he has taken. Interestingly, this can be *any* amount from nothing at all to over thirty dollars.

METHOD

What with this following on *Handbook* (page 496) I am beginning to think of myself as the pioneer of low-tech solutions for this kind of effect.

You will need a wooden box with a hinged lid; ideally this should have a lot of ornate fretwork around the sides. Such boxes are readily obtainable at import stores.

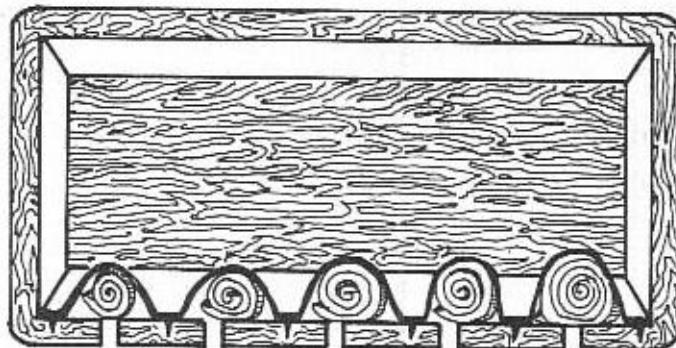
With a small drill you make five holes through the back wall of the box as per the illustration on the next page. Across the inside back wall you affix a length of half-inch white elastic ribbon so that it conceals the holes from view when one looks into the box.

*Small holes hidden in design*

Above and below the ribbon between each of the holes you put flat-head tacks, and run a length of wire between the upper and lower tack over the ribbon. This acts as a guide and insures that the ribbon will lie flat against the back of the box when no rolls of bills are in place. You install the elastic ribbon with enough tension on it to assure that it will be pulled flat.

You have five rolls of bills, all composed of one-dollar bills.

The first of these is one dollar—a single bill; the other four contain two dollars, four dollars, eight dollars and sixteen dollars. Given this distribution, it is possible for the spectator to select any amount of money from zero to thirty-one dollars. The bills are rolled green side out.



You do *not* label the rolls with the amounts they contain; thus the spectator will not know the total of the rolls selected until the counting is done. From the audience's point of view there may be many more rolls in the container, each containing a different amount of currency.

The five rolls are placed in the box in descending sequence left to right—so that when you are looking at the box from the rear they will be in *ascending* order, a bit easier to total.

When the spectator removes a roll of bills the white elastic flattens against the wall of the box, concealing the hole from his view—but from your view a white dot suddenly appears on the back of the box. Since the hole is small—it need be no larger than an eighth of an inch (and may be smaller, depending on your eyesight)—and a box of the kind suggested has fairly thick walls, you

MYND

have to be dead in line with the holes in order to see them. The decorative scrollwork used on these kinds of boxes also helps to conceal the holes.

It is not difficult at all to stand a considerable distance upstage of the box and 'read the dots', thus learning which rolls have been removed.

NOTES

The rolled-up bills are secured with a piece of masking or other paper tape, not a rubber band. The paper tape looks more 'bank-like' and official; also, a rubber band might be pulled off by the elastic ribbon.

You have the spectator put the money in a baggie before he puts it in his pocket, so that there won't be any chance of your money getting mixed up with his—and so that some of your money won't stay with his, inadvertently or otherwise.

Given the simplicity of the box, you will appreciate that it can be used for a number of different presentations:

Poison

Each of five spectators chooses a vial with a colored liquid, one of which has been designated as lethal. You locate the prospective victim.

Mr. Ree

This variant of the Clue™-type of game uses five cardboard tubes, each of which can contain a small model of a weapon; application and presentation is readily seen. (Similar games may have suitable props of this kind.)

Essencery Perception

Five vials of perfume—the lady selects one, returns to her seat in the audience and takes a tiny sniff of it; you instantly name it—and of course she keeps the perfume as your gift for assisting.

ReMarkerable

Five different colors of marker—the spectator selects those needed to duplicate a design exactly. As the designs presented are drawn with unique combinations of the five possibilities, knowing which markers have been taken tells you what design is being thought of.⁵ Of course you would also have the design cards and perhaps other items in the box—the spectators then regarding it as simply a 'prop box'.

All of these effects can be done with your back turned and, if you wish, with a simple fake blindfold. Here you use the concept of Annemann's *Mystery Of The Blackboard*⁶—a slight and momentary turn to the front as you ask if the spectator has completed his task (*after* you are sure he has)

⁵A presentational approach for this will be found under the heading of *Chromantic* on page 287.

⁶ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 228.

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is enough to glimpse the back of the box and get your information. This action is so innocent that, in the context of this effect, the blindfold is not really necessary—but it may add a nice visual touch and make things a bit more dramatic and interesting.

CREDITS

The inspiration for the basic effect is, of course, Tony Corinda's Money Box⁷. Variants of the general methodology have been used by Len Belcher⁸ and Scalbert⁹.

⁷See his THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, page 150.

⁸While I am reasonably certain that the Belcher item to which I refer here—which involved a cleverly gimmicked card stand—appeared in an issue of *Abra*, However, the precise reference has eluded me, despite a lengthy search of that and several other periodicals.

⁹SCALBERT'S SELECTED SECRETS, page 152.

THREESUM

I have long been fascinated with the three-phase prediction—and in fact devoted a whole section of this book (*CERBERUS*, page 47) to this kind of routine.

As noted there, two things I *didn't* like about the usual presentation of this sort were (a) the sometimes convoluted ways the predictions were marked to prove you were writing the prediction you were supposed to be writing—ways so convoluted they would often make the spectators wonder why you were going to such lengths to prove you weren't doing something and thus to suspect (correctly) that it was because you *were* doing something—and (b) the selections made didn't seem to have any particular logic to them, and tended to get less difficult rather than more. (*Pick any number from one to a million! Any city in the entire world! Now, uh, would you choose a card? . . .*)

In what follows I have attempted once more to correct these flaws.

EFFECT

The effect actually begins before it begins . . .

. . . just prior to this you've done a card divination, in the course of which three spectators have chosen cards from a pack while your back was turned. You have, with appropriate histrionics, divined the selections—not the most difficult thing in the world, since you used a three-kind force deck.

Now you offer to try an experiment in prophecy; since cards have been used you will keep to the gaming theme. You display a Bingo-type card.

Setting it aside for the moment, you say that first you will make a prophecy. You take from one of the spectators *her selected card*; on the face of it you note down something as you rest it on a small clipboard. You then drop the card, back out, into a glass.

The spectator is handed the pen and instructed to circle any one of the five letters on the Bingo card—B,I,N,G or O; she does so.

You take another of the selected cards from a spectator, write a prophecy as before, and drop it into the glass along with the first. You hand the pen to this spectator and say you will make things much more difficult for yourself; he is to circle any one of the twenty-five numbers on the Bingo card.

This he does, drawing at your instruction a double circle around the selected number.

Taking the last of the three selected cards, you write a prophecy for the third spectator; as before, the card is dropped into the glass.

This time, however, you take the Bingo card yourself for a moment and cross out all the numbers in the same column and row as the second spectator's selection; you do this as an illustration, telling Spectator Three that you now want her to circle any other number on the board and then eliminate the vertical and horizontal rows in which it lies in this fashion.

She does this, and repeats the process three more times—so that five numbers are circled on the card and all others are crossed out. You point out that there are hundreds of possible combinations, and then total the circled numbers, writing the total at the bottom of the card.

Needless to say, when the three playing cards are dumped out onto the table and checked by the spectators, they find that the cards correctly predict their three random choices.

B I N G O				
4	19	14	24	9
1	16	11	21	6
3	18	13	23	8
2	17	12	22	7
5	20	15	25	10

B I N G O				
4	19	14	24	9
1	16	11	21	6
3	18	13	23	8
2	17	12	22	7
5	20	15	25	10

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METHOD

As you see, without ever belaboring the point at all you have provided very clear proof that you are writing each spectator's prediction when you appear to be... the playing cards being fully as unique as anything with colored markers, etc., could possibly be...

...but of course they aren't; not quite. You have a duplicate of one of the cards—and while the other two cards may be free choices this one must be forced (so why not force all three for the prior effect and be done with it?). This duplicate matches the card of the spectator who will make the third choice. At the outset the duplicate rests on the face of the clipboard you use as a writing surface, and is kept turned away from the audience; it may, for the sake of convenience, be secured by the clip itself until you need it, at which point you move it down to the center of the board and hold it by thumb pressure. I should note that the board I use for this is a small one, about four inches by six; anything larger would be cumbersome.

In performance you take the first spectator's selected card and slide it under the hidden one (both cards, of course, have faces toward you). You write the force total (of which more later) on the duplicate of Spectator Three's card and then drop it in the glass. The first spectator now circles a letter on the Bingo card.

Taking the second spectator's selected card, you slide it under the first spectator's still-hidden card, then write on Spectator One's card her selected letter; this card is dropped in the glass to join the first.

In like manner Three's card is taken and slid under Two's, and on Two's card his selected number is written; it joins the other two.

The clipboard is put away, along with the concealed duplicate of Three's card. The spectator circles her numbers, crosses out the others and together you total them; then the three prophecies are dumped out and shown to be correct.

All that remains to be explained is the force procedure.

The Bingo card used is illustrated on the facing page. You can make up a nice official-looking version of it with press-on type and numbers (you could, in fact, take a regular Bingo card, white out the numbers and put in these, using presstype), and then have it duplicated on card stock.

Given this layout—and the procedure described—the total will always be sixty-five, no matter what numbers are circled by Spectators Two and Three.

This is Mel Stover's *Irresistible Force*, which originally appeared in *The New Phoenix*¹⁰. Set up as though a legitimate Bingo card, it looks entirely innocent, and the sequence of three selections of progressively greater difficulty appears quite logical.

That's really all there is to it.

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NOTES

In the Stover source mentioned above he shows you how to design a square to force any number, which might come in handy if, for example, your next effect required the forcing of a particular book page. You could use Spectator Three for the effect along with her freely-chosen (?) number.

As you will note, the above way of handling the cards is reminiscent of Triposte on page 59, which brings us to the—

CREDITS

The prediction handling is based on that in Peter Warlock's *Caught Thoughts*¹¹ the number force, as indicated, is Mel Stover's. (You might also want to take a look at *Force Majeur* in Phil Goldstein's *DOTH*¹².)

¹¹ *Pentagram*, Vol. 10, No. 6; March 1956; page 43—and No. 7; April 1956; page 49.

¹² Page 9.

TRIVARIATIONS

As the title suggests, here are three variations on well-known pieces of mentalism that you may find useful.

STABALLOON

Most of you will be aware of the prediction, sold and described under various names, where a folded billet is seen within an inflated balloon. In the usual routine the balloon is put into an improvised bag formed from a large handkerchief and burst, whereupon the billet is retrieved and checked...

...actually the visible 'billet' in the balloon is a piece torn from another balloon, folded and pressed to a billet-shape. When the balloon is burst it blends in with the other pieces, and the billet bearing your prediction—which you have secretly loaded into the handkerchief-bag—is revealed.

Simple enough—but I have come up with something even simpler (some may say simple-minded). You do not mess about with the handkerchief, the secret load and so forth. Instead, you simply have the spectator toss the balloon in your general direction and you burst it...

...with a Dr. Jaks-type Letter Opener which ejects your prediction billet from the tip. The billet falls to the ground along with the various fragments of balloon and is picked up by the spectator.

When the bursting takes place this spectator is the only one who even has a chance of seeing anything (even if there's anything to see)—and she most likely is going to blink at the crucial moment.

Note: A Sackville-type Billet Knife, where the billet is ejected from the side, won't work for this—use the Jaks model where the billet comes from the tip.

WIPEOUT

Most of you will be familiar with the Norman Ashworth *Before Your Eyes* effect where the words THE NAME OF THE CARD IS are erased from a slate, but some of the letters remain to spell out TEN OF HEARTS.¹³

My thought here is to use it not as a gag revelation but as a two-way out, using the erasable marker principle and a prediction card prepared with the two layers of clear acetate as described in *Clockout*. Here the original message would read THE NAME OF THE CARD IS THE SIX OF DIAMONDS; placed down on the table the prediction card could simply be turned over to reveal this message, or slid across the tablecloth for the spectator to look at, an action which would remove all but the letters which spelled TEN OF HEARTS. (If you feel a need to explain the uneven spacing of the letters in this message, credit it to automatic writing or channeling.) For a stand-up or platform situation a cloth-backed easel could be used in much the same way, or you could even surreptitiously wipe it on your clothes (not recommended, particularly if the prediction is in black and you're wearing a Palm Beach suit!).

THE NAME
OF
THE CARD IS THE SIX
OF
DIAMONDS

T E N
O F
H E A R T S

This same two-out methodology can be used in what I will readily admit is a much more straightforward way by employing a concept of the Scalberts which you will find on page 26 of their excellent SCALBERT'S SELECTED SECRETS; here they show how you can, by erasure, change the EIGHT OF HEARTS into the SIX OF CLUBS—and they give suggestions for still more changes that can be well used with the approach here described.

(NOTE 1993: The above notion was originally published well before Tenyo Co. marketed their Ghostwriter, which has a vague similarity in method.)

SELLERBITY

A major problem with many book tests is their lack of any kind of visual appeal. Here is a presentational approach for a very old method that you may find useful.

¹³If you don't recall the details you will find it in ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 168.

MYND

EFFECT

You show your prediction, which may be anything from a nine-by-twelve-inch envelope to a nine-by-twelve-foot board.

A spectator having been invited to partake in the festivities, she is handed a magazine. This is, in fact, a puzzle magazine of the Find-A-Word kind where the pages each have large squares of letters, and the problem for the puzzler is to find particular words in the horizontal, vertical or diagonal rows.

You tell the spectator you are going to have her select a random group of letters by looping them with a pencil—here you demonstrate—but she is to do this looping with the magazine held behind her back.

She does as instructed, and you thank her for her help.

You then take the magazine over to the spectator guarding (or standing beside!) the prediction and ask them to look through the magazine until they find the marked page and then read off the looped letters (if any). The spectator locates the page and reads off "S-N-A-V-E-A-D-N-I-L." You are momentarily nonplussed but it then occurs to you to have him read off the letters in the opposite direction.

He does so—and then you turn around your prediction to show a Krystle-clear picture of LINDA EVANS.

METHOD

—is Tom Sellers'¹⁴, and consists of a pencil that does not write and a page previously marked with a loop appropriate to the force. The usual way these days is to use a Chromatic™ two-barrel pen, one barrel of which has been written dry, so that the pen can write, or not, as you choose.

These Find-A-Word puzzle magazines are readily available, and nearly all have at least one 'celebrity-name' puzzle. Do pick a celebrity most people will recognize (even then play it safe and caption the photo; nearly everyone knows what Liza Minelli looks like, but Annie Lennox never looks the same way twice).

Do not have the spectator who made the marking loop look through and find it; she may recall what size loop she made, or roughly where in the magazine it was.

This presentation, I think you'll find, has a nice visual finish that will play in highly satisfactory fashion.

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CREDITS

A Chromatic pen was first employed with the Sellers idea in Predict-O, a marketed effect by Harry Lorayne.

¹⁴Tom Sellers' NEW AGE BOOK TEST, released as No. 9 of the Thayer Trick Of The Month Club, second series (March 1933).

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CROSS-REFERENCE

ThreeSum: see *Triposte*—page 59

SPYRYT

[1984]

RECENTLY I HAD a conversation with one of my regular readers and he made the comment that, while he liked the effects quite a bit, he found my introductions self-indulgent to some degree. This surprised me on two counts—first, I've always thought my introductions were *extremely* self-indulgent—and second, I didn't know that anyone ever read them.

Be that as it may, I shall attempt to mend my ways here by actually discussing the subject of this section, i.e., mediumistic and spirit effects.

I know of some mentalists who will never do effects of this kind, or even those with a psychokinetic presentation; they feel that when you do something that has a physical effect you are overstepping the bounds of believability, and that if people perceive the spirit/PK effect as a trick they will extend that and assume that everything else in the act is also faked.

Given the premise I will accept the conclusion—but I am not at all sure that the premise is correct. On a theoretical level I would find it difficult to believe that anyone would accept the linking of finger rings as anything but a trick—but in actual practice that does not seem to be the case. As I have mentioned before, several people who have seen Kreskin do the ring effect have accepted it as a genuine PK phenomenon. Moreover, in the recent Benassi-Singer series of experiments where a performer was presented variously to a class as a real psychic—as a possible psychic—and as a complete fake, even in the latter case, when the students were *told* the performer was a fake, well over fifty percent of them *still* believed his feats which included metal bending were real.

It is clearly difficult to overestimate the willingness of laypersons to accept these kinds of phenomena as genuine.

Given that most of us have seen fairly inept performers convince people that genuine psychic work was being done, it follows that an even moderately well-performed feat along this line will be convincing to just about everyone. Certainly the bulk of Uri Geller's reputation has been built on PK effects—and it is an index of the appeal of such things that in spite of countless exposures that purport to reveal his methods, he is as effective as ever. Only a few weeks ago (1984), on a San Francisco TV show, he did the spoon and nail bending as usual, and indications were that over ninety percent of the audience believed what they were seeing was the real thing.

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One point common to Geller and Kreskin is instructive—they do not perform these effects *casually*. They make it seem like what they're doing is important, is special. The effects do not occur at the convenience and behest of the audience—they take a little time—as indeed would be the case if the effects were real. That, at any rate, is how the audience perceives it.

Setting, of course, has a great deal to do with how a performance is perceived. A presentation that might play as real at a college date might simply play boringly at a nightclub—because if you're at a college you could be primarily seen as a lecturer-demonstrator exhibiting the strange and erratic powers you possess, but if you're working a nightclub which provides floor-show entertainment then you're a floor-show entertainer *first*, and whatever else you might or might not be is a secondary consideration.

It is, in fact, the ignorance of so many mentalists as to this elementary distinction that accounts for the relative rarity of mentalists as nightclub performers. They go in and do exactly the same sort of show in a nightclub as they would do for a college or organization, and it dies the death.

It may seem that I am wandering a bit afield here, but that is not really the case. What I am trying to say is that in mentalism more than in most fields (including magic), *where* you perform has a direct bearing on *what* you perform—and this is particularly true in the category of effects described in this book.

Obviously you're not going to do the *Dancing Handkerchief* at a séance, any more than you're going to wait several minutes for a few spirit raps in the middle of a floor show. Not all determinations are as simple as this, however.

It would be foolish of me to attempt to set down any hard-and-fast guidelines for making these kinds of choices. There is, however, a way of thinking about effects that you may find useful in making such decisions.

You use a musical analogy—which is to say, you find the rhythm, the pace at which the effect to be considered plays most strongly. This might be sprightly, as in the case of the back-and-forth of a spirit bell routine, or it might be stately, as with the long-held moment before the block falls over.

This done, compare it with the rhythms of the other effects you've found work best for the performance venue in mind, and see how it fits in. Bear in mind that in any competent symphonic work there will be variations in tempo and mood—but that, taken as a whole, it moves steadily forward to a fitting conclusion.

In doing this you have to be merciless on yourself, which means that it doesn't matter how good an effect is if it doesn't really fit into the act. I have at least a dozen absolute miracles that I have yet to perform in public simply because I've been thus far unable to find the right performance context for them.

You may be able to use the 'musical' approach described, or you may have to find another guide. Do bear in mind, however, that it really doesn't matter how great an effect may be, if it isn't the *right* effect.

SPYRYT

In what follows I will make specific suggestions as to the performance situation I feel is best suited to the piece at hand; certainly these *are* only suggestions, not strictures—but they are not given without considerable thought, so it would please me if you'd give them some mulling over.

Now that wasn't *too* self-indulgent, was it?

Hello...?

BELLSAMO

The ringing of a bell, presumably by discarnate entities, is one of the oldest spirit effects known. It is older, even, than spiritualism; throughout most of history bells have been known to have an affinity for the supernatural. The sound of a bell as a sign of death, or of the advent of a ghost, is a staple of legend and literature.

Simulating this phenomenon has been of interest to professional deceivers of all stripes for more than a century. Joseph Hartz employed a crystal bell which would ring when suspended from two cords or while on the end of a wand.¹ Since his day many other methods have been devised, ranging from threads to trained birds to electronics. Here is yet another approach to the problem, with a hypothetical example of how it might be used.

EFFECT

You've had a spectator select a Tarot card, which she retains. Returning to the stage you open a wooden box, and from it you extract an ordinary-appearing desk bell. In fact it is ordinary, and may be examined.

It is placed on the table and a cut-glass bowl is inverted over it, sealing it completely. You do whatever is necessary to invoke the spirit or other assisting power, and then ask if the spirit is present. The bell rings in reply.

You walk over to the spectator who has the Tarot card and ask her if she is concentrating on it. Receiving assent, you ask the spirit if it has an impression of her thought. The bell rings once. "Is the card of the Greater Arcana?" Silence. "Lesser, then. Coins? Swords?" At this the bell rings twice, then after the briefest of pauses one more time.

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¹See Hoffmann's LATER MAGIC, page 71.

SPYRYT

seem to be able to produce a convincing tone; also, the larger the barrel is the longer will be the pauses, of which more later.

To prepare the gimmick takes some preliminary experimentation. You should have two or three prospective 'visible' bells of different notes available when you do this testing, as it will increase your chances of getting a close match.

For the test you unscrew the 'fork' (the metal piece with the tines that are plucked as the barrel revolves) and then screw it back down facing *away* from the barrel. It has to be refastened in this way so that it will retain the same tone for the test as when it is in its proper position. (Technical point: the two screws which hold the fork are usually not in line, so when you do this reorientation the fork will stick out at an odd angle. Don't worry about it; this is just for testing purposes.)

Ring one of your test bells and then, with any fine-pointed object, pluck the tines of the fork until you find the matching note. Test the other bells to find the one with the best match of sound. Do remember, in doing this, that the *note* has to match but not the *tone*—since what the audience is presumably hearing is the sound of the *covered* bell and there's no way the visible bell can be covered and then tested. If, therefore, the note from the fork sounds tinny in comparison to the visible bell, this is no cause for concern.

Your troubles are not quite over, as yet; now you have to find out if you've located a usable note—which brings us to the pauses.

Mark your chosen tine with a spot of ink and then fix the fork back into its proper position and let the music-box play.

As it does, observe the tine carefully, and note down the pattern of the plucking of this note as the music-box goes through a cycle. A stop-watch, pencil and paper are useful here, as is the assistance of a friend.

In fact—as I indicated above in the Joseffy story—it is not often you will find a pattern that is totally unusable. The one requirement here is that at some point in the cycle—and preferably twice—there should be a space of at least a few seconds in which the tine is not plucked.

This locating of the proper tine and noting down of the pattern is the most time-consuming part of the preparation.

Once you've done it, all you have to do is keep all the other tines from sounding, and this is accomplished simply by bending them up out of line slightly with the aid of the pliers.

In doing this, *don't* bend them any farther than you have to, since you don't want to distort the working tine. Also, be sure that this process doesn't press two adjacent tines together; if it does it will create a fuzzy sound and you will have to locate and separate them.

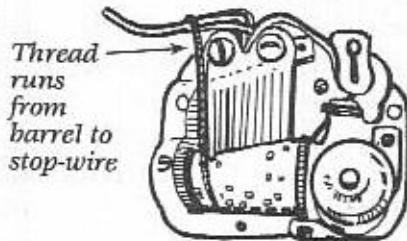
Alternatively, you can simply cut them away with tin snips; care is required to do this without cutting or damaging the remaining tine. (Note: An alternative

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approach to this preparation is to cut away all the other *projections* on the *barrel*; this is, however, a more difficult job to do neatly.)

This done, you're about ready. You have only to attach the music-box movement to the inside of the wooden box that will carry the visible bell. In selecting this box, find one where the bottom of the box is inset (does not touch the surface on which the box rests); it will produce a better tone.

Most of these music-box movements have a spinning flywheel setup, with a piece of wire that can be adjusted to impede the flywheel or let it spin free. If you tie a thread around the barrel and then attach the other end to this control wire, it will create a situation where as the box plays it slowly takes up the thread until it automatically stops itself. Experimentation will allow you to stop the cycle of the movement just where you want to—and this is useful, since it means that you don't have to rush back to the stage to 'turn the bell off' when the routine is concluded.



In setting the bell for the routine, you let it cycle to a point just before one of the longer pauses between rings. This allows you to set the mechanism in motion and then move well away from it and ask a question before the bell rings to respond.

Obviously I cannot outline a specific routine, since that will be determined by the pattern of the rings that you end up using. It may be, in fact, that you have to try two or three movements with different melodies before you find one with the right note in the right pattern. Given the strength of the effect, I think it is worth just a little bit of trouble.

Your best source for the music-box movement is likely to be a flea market or garage sale; the one I use was unearthed in a second-hand store and cost me all of a buck.

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As the routine will be to some degree predetermined by the note-pattern, so will the presentation be influenced by the kind of visible bell used. If it's a desk bell, it could be haunted by the spirit of a customer who died of apoplexy while waiting for service that never came... or perhaps it is from the front desk of the Overlook Hotel. A brass bell from India could have belonged to the mystic whose *chela* you were, and who still assists you from his exalted plane. A sleigh bell could... no, no, better not explore that one.

I should stress that the gimmick should be screwed down *tightly* to the floor of the wooden box; not glued. You want the box to act as a sounding board. Along the same lines, it is better if the box sits on a bare table, rather than a cloth-covered one. The box's lid is left open, its top facing to the audience, standing straight up; this both diffuses the tone and acts as a visual backdrop.

SPYRYT

for the visible bell. Do experiment with the various permutations of these suggestions to find the one that creates for your particular bell the most convincing aural illusion.

Given the particular requirements of the routine here—the bell will ring several times—I don't think this will play as a 'heavy', very serious phenomenon. This doesn't mean you can't present it as *genuine*—you might simply take the approach that this is business as usual for you, here's this invisible entity who apparently doesn't have anything better to do than tell you what Tarot card someone's thinking about. The mood is kind of like Bill Murray's bland acceptance of demonic forces in *GIHOSTBUSTERS*—of course if you can carry this off in anything like the way Murray does, you may be in the wrong branch of show business!

PALIMPTEST

What follows is not an effect or a method—it is a presentational angle, a 'convincer' to be used in the context of a slate-writing routine. As such, it can be effectively employed in just about anything along these lines, from a stage presentation such as *The Psychic Coercion Of The Interrupted Schoolboy* (page 41) to a serious seance-room experiment.

A problem in such routines is to get the audience to believe that the writing which appears on the slate is actually written in the course of the effect, and not that it is writing done earlier which you somehow must have concealed. This can in part be helped by a good force—obviously you could not have written something on the slate beforehand if you did not know what the choice was going to be—and another approach to this has been the use of a hidden assistant who could prepare the message after the information was known.

Here, however, we're going to make use of a psychological subtlety; it is something to which you do *not* draw attention, but which registers all the same.

The concept is this:

Prior to the routine in which the message appears, you use the slate in another effect. At the outset of *this* effect the slate is spotlessly clean, having been washed with water.

The effect is, for example, a book test; the spectator has picked at a word and is concentrating on it. After the appropriate dramatics you pick up the slate and write the word; the spectator announces his thought and you turn around the slate to show that you've correctly divined the word.

You set the slate aside at the conclusion of the effect and apparently forget about it.

SPYRYT

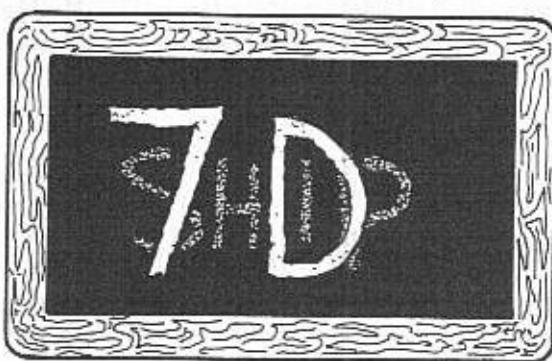
Presently—after one or two intermediate effects—you begin your presentation regarding psychography, i.e., the writing of messages by spirits.

You pick up the slate and notice that the word from the divination effect is still on it; taking a cloth, you wipe the slate clean.

However—if this is done with a dry cloth, traces of the chalk will remain, and the word will still be clearly visible.

You ask for a spectator's initials and write them on the other side of the slate, which is then set on display or sealed in an envelope—whatever is required by the effect. Of course when the slate is examined the spirit message has appeared on the 'blank' side

but—and here's the point of all of this—the previously erased word is still visible as it was at the start of the effect, proof that the words of the spirit message appeared on that specific surface.



As you have doubtless deduced, to prepare for this you wash the slate and, after it dries, write the word to be forced in the divination effect. This word is then erased with a dry cloth and the spirit message written. In doing this the words should be so spaced that the remains of the erased force word are clearly visible.

A slate flap is placed over the message, and all is ready.

The original divination can, of course, be anything you can force—card, date, whatever—here we'll assume that it is the riffle-force of a book page from which the spectator notes the first word.

In divining the word you write it on the flap, matching as closely as possible the way you wrote it on the slate proper. At the conclusion of this effect, all is ready for the slate-writing effect.

In that routine you write the spectator's initials on the side of the slate not covered by the flap. In putting the slate on display the flap is disposed of as per the requirements of your routine...

...and it remains only to show the appearance of the message.

As you will appreciate, this angle can be used in just about any slate-writing routine or method. Note also that it can be used in multiple routines—with the Massey Duplex Slate your divination effect might be of two items, say a word and a page number (both forced). Each would be written on one side of the Massey slate. Later the slate would be cleaned on both sides and dropped into the envelope, and when messages appeared on both sides traces of the original writing would be seen.

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Another approach to this would be in conjunction with an effect such as Peter Warlock's *The Schoolbag*³. Here the force word is written and erased on both slate and flap; on the flap, additionally, you write the message that appears on the slate proper and then erase it also. Then the messages are written in. In the course of the routine, when the first message appears, *you erase it* after the audience has seen it—then, when the second message appears, the spectators see not only traces of the word from the earlier divination effect but also of the just-erased first message. It thus seems an inescapable conclusion that these messages are really appearing one after the other on the same surface.

It may be thought that I have spent a lot of time and verbiage on what is just a 'touch'—but sometimes it's the touches that make all the difference.



NOTE 1993: This general principle can be applied to other effects as well. Let's suppose, for example, that you've written a prediction on a scrap of paper and then executed the necessary force to conclude the effect. Saying you will try something further, you erase the writing and write something else, then dropping the paper into a container. This second prediction also proves to be correct...

...because you have a billet index, in each compartment of which is a different prediction—and each of these papers *has had the force word written on it and then erased*.

This application of the principle will sell the idea that no switch could have taken place.

As an alternative to erasure you could simply cross the word out—this action having of course been duplicated on your indexed billets.

Please note that this procedure only makes sense if the scrap of paper used for the prediction is apparently the only piece of paper you have—if you're working with a pad of paper, re-using one sheet instead of a fresh one is going to make you seem cheap at best and peculiar at worst.

³ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 196.

TRAYF

Among the prized possessions in the collections of many mentalists is the Thayer Rapping Hand Board. This board (sometimes built as three boards held together by crosspieces) was invented over fifty years ago, and is quite ingenious in operation. Pressure on a screw set into the underside of the board causes a pin to rise out of its upper surface, and the movement of this pin causes a hand or skull to rap.

The tray to be described also uses the concept of something rising from the center of its surface to accomplish the various effects—but it is entirely new in appearance, operation and principle.

In appearance it is simply a glass tray in a wooden frame; it is freely exhibited. Yet when, for example, a small carved hand is placed in the very center of the clear surface, it will tilt down to rap. Your hands do not appear to move at all as you hold the tray, and it can be worked under close observation.

Let's first take a look at the construction of the tray—which is quite simple—and then discuss what can be done with it.

First of all, the surface of the tray is Lucite™, not of glass. This is for two reasons: the first is that it is much less likely to break, and the second is that it will take glue better. The Lucite is about an eighth of an inch thick.

The size of the tray should be about twelve inches by eighteen inches—if, as I did, you adapt a picture frame, it should be of roughly this size. Two other ways to create this frame are to construct it from the channeled wood molding (used for shelf-edging) available in lumber and do-it-yourself stores—or to build it up from strips of wood (one narrow strip inset on one side from a sandwich of somewhat wider strips).

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All it really is, of course, is a frame for the Lucite that is reasonably tray-like in appearance. You may, in fact, actually find a clear tray with solid frame that has the one special requirement you'll need to gaff it.

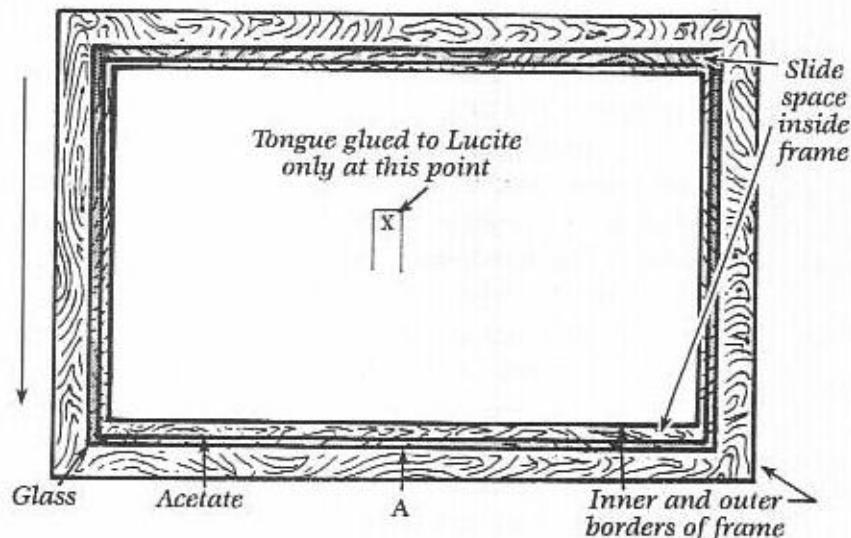
The requirement is hardly a tough one: the inner edges of the frame cover at least a quarter-inch of the outer edges of the Lucite at the sides. There should be some overlap along the ends but it can be very little. The Lucite should be a bit loose in the frame, in the sense that it should be a bit thinner than the channel it's in.

Such a tray built or located, you need only three other things:

- A *very sharp* razorcutting-edge knife (X-Acto™, etc.)
- A tube of *clear* epoxy glue.
- A thin sheet of clear acetate, the same size as your piece of Lucite.

For the sake of description we will assume that your piece of Lucite is exactly twelve by eighteen inches. Trim the acetate to a size of $11\frac{1}{8}$ inches by $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches. If this has been done correctly, if the acetate is put on top of the Lucite and both are placed in the frame, the acetate should be able to move back and forth half an inch without any of its edges being exposed.

This tested, remove the acetate from the frame and in its center cut a 'tongue' as indicated in the illustration. The sharper and thinner the blade, the less visible will this cut be.

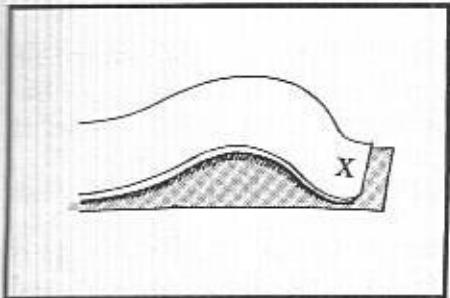


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Now comes the important part. The acetate is replaced in the tray and slid so that the edge shown as A is flush against the inside of the frame (in other words, it can move no farther in the direction indicated by the arrow).

Keeping it in this position, glue the *tongue only*, and *only* at the point marked X, to the Lucite. Use as little glue as possible; if you can find a clear superglue, only a tiny dot is needed. No more than an eighth of an inch at the end of the tongue should be glued.

SPYRYT



If all this has been done correctly—and though it is a bit complex to explain it is very easy to do—you will find that when you slide the acetate sheet (by the pressure of your thumbs at the sides of the tray as you hold it), the tongue will *buckle upward*, as shown in the detail at the left. You will also note that it takes very little movement to accomplish this.

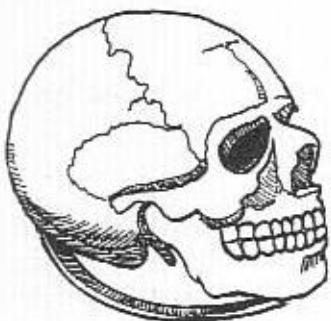
(Note: the first time you try it you may have to insert the knife blade carefully under the tongue to bend it a little and thus 'teach' it—after that it won't be necessary.)

So that's how it's made, and that's how you operate it. If it has been carefully done the tongue will be invisible to all but the closest visual inspection—and when it is that close the hand, skull or whatever is sitting on top of it and will render detection just a bit difficult! Since a transparent sheet moving on a transparent base is for all practical purposes invisible, you need have no worries on that score.

Basically what you've got here, as with the Thayer Board, is something that gives an object an upward push, so all the props must be designed with that in mind.

The Hand

The usual rapping hand—so balanced that the fingers rest somewhat above the tray surface as the hand rests on the wrist. Actuation of the tongue pushes up on the wrist and causes the hand to tilt forward and rap.



The Skull

This can be of two kinds—one set with its jaws slightly open; here the skull proper tilts forward, causing the teeth to click—the other with a broad metal band running from the back of the skull to just under the jaw, so the skull stands upright on the band and can rock forward to rap with the point of its jaw.

The Spirit Buzzer

This is usually a simple circuit mounted on a small board; it consists of button-switch, battery and buzzer. The button-switch is actuated by pressure from above on the button itself—but if it has been mounted over a hole (ostensibly so its underside can be inspected and seen to be ordinary), the tongue can rise up from the tray and close the circuit by pressure from below.

(Note: I mention this item for completeness, but you should probably not use anything involving an electrical device, as spectators may suspect electronic gimmickry.)

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The Spirit Bell

This can be an electric bell, operated like the *Buzzer* (but see note above), or it can be a manual bell. In the latter case experimentation will indicate how the clapper of the bell can be moved by the tongue. Used in this manner it could be an interesting adjunct to *Bellsamo*.

The Shoe

In this lovely presentational notion of William W. Larsen, Sr., the concept is that you have the dancing shoe of a sweet young thing who died of love, and who now will answer questions (for lovers, of course) by a tap of her shoe.

If you use this, it occurs to me that you could find an appropriate old picture or painting of a dancer, and the tray could serve as a picture frame. You remove the picture—after all, you don't want little Carlotta dancing on her own face!—and proceed with the routine.

There are, in fact, many effects where some sort of remote control device is required.

For example:

The Alarm Clock

For a prediction effect, this is a special clock from which the escapement has been removed, and a small rod attached and led down through a hole in the bottom of the clock casing. Such a clock sits innocently on the tray, back to the audience, and as you pick up the tray you cause the hands to spin around and stop at any designated time *without any need to touch the clock itself*. The necessary action could be completed in the time it takes you to leave the stage and walk down to the spectator (of course you finish the action before the face of the clock is visible to anyone in the audience).



I have little doubt that you will find enough uses for *Trayf* to make it well worth the small cost and minimal effort required to construct.

NOTES

As a construction variant you might wish to switch the dimensions of the acetate sheet and the Lucite—so that it is the Lucite slid by your fingers underneath the tray. Your choice will depend on which handling seems more comfortable and natural to you.

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The acetate must be kept clean. Normally a slight spot or blemish might be forgivable, but if people see the blemish moving—I trust you get the point. It doesn't matter if the underside of the Lucite gets scratched, except for sake of appearance (unless you use the construction variant just mentioned, in which the Lucite moves). There will come a point, however, when both Lucite and acetate sheet have to be replaced, since they will pick up scratches over time. Both are cheap; err on the side of caution in deciding when to remake the tray.

SPYRYT

You *can* use plate glass instead of Lucite in making the tray but I do not recommend it for the reasons given and one other, which is that it'll weigh a ton—or at least seem like it after you've been holding it out in front of you for a few minutes. It's up to you just how much you want to suffer for your art.

Do make a point of holding the tray rock-steady during these routines; you don't want someone to think that your supernatural wonders are accomplished just by tilting the tray.

Would that it were that simple.

HCI

This close-up presentation has several interesting points about it and should, I think, be given a very serious approach.

EFFECT

You place on the table an object wrapped in a silken foulard. Drawing the cloth aside, you reveal the object to be pack of Tarot cards; the querent is invited to pick them up and mix them thoroughly. As she does this you point out that in this way the cards become imbued with her psychometric vibrations, and that no one else is to touch them. (This subtly points out, be it noted, that *you* do not touch them.)

The mixing completed, the querent is invited to cut off about half the cards and place them on the handkerchief (to isolate them from the vibrations of the table). The querent now removes the top card of those remaining in her hand, notes it, and at your direction places it on top of the tabled cards. The remainder of the pack is now placed on top of the chosen card.

At this point the cloth may be drawn over the pack—or it may remain uncovered, as you choose.

Presentations may vary, but the essential point now is that there be a long moment when nothing at all happens—you have not indicated that anything *will* happen—and then, suddenly, the pack cuts itself! On inspection the top card of the lower half proves to be the querent's card.

The pack is without preparation and may immediately be used for a reading or other purpose. Nothing has been attached to it at any time.

METHOD

There have been many versions of this kind of effect; I do think that the handling and approach here described is far more practical than most.

SPYRYT

The way you find the card—and part of the reason for its motion—is the venerable salt location. Here, however, we'll just use the *spirit* of the idea; instead of salt we use aquarium sand of the fine-grain grade. Why aquarium sand? Because it can be purchased in a number of different colors—and we naturally pick a color that will match the backs of the cards we're using.

A pinch of this sand is taken from the pocket as the spectator mixes the cards; it is held between the thumb and *second* finger. When she has finished mixing the cards you tell her to cut off about half and place them *"down here"*—you indicate the proper spot on the handkerchief by pointing with the hand that holds the sand, but you don't release any yet. The spectator is instructed to look at the top card of the half pack she holds and to *"place it on top of these cards"*—again the gesture and again no sand. Finally you tell her to *"put the rest of the cards on top of these"* and in making the gesture this time you release the grains of sand onto the tabled cards. Now, given the impetus, the cards will divide at the selected one.

How do you provide that impetus?

There are two ways. The first is to use what has come to be known as a Glorpy gimmick. This is a handkerchief which has been prepared with a piece of bent wire in its hem so that some pressure exerted on one section of the folded handkerchief as it rests on the table will cause another part of it to rise up.

You will realize that the pack is placed down on the handkerchief, at your gesture, in the proper spot just above the bent wire. Given that situation, your hands can now rest on the cloth, clearly not touching the pack—and actuating the wire gimmick briefly will cause the pack to tilt long enough for the upper half (aided by the sand) to slide off.

I should warn you that while some Glorpy-type gimmicks are strong enough to do this, others—particularly if you are using a Tarot pack—aren't. You will have to test to find a satisfactory model; alternatively you can replace the wire in the cloth as provided with one of a heavier gauge.

If neither of these courses is satisfactory to you, use the second way:

This is the ever-beloved palpator novelty Plate-Lifter gimmick. For those few who have never spent the proper amount of time in novelty shops, the palpator is simply a thin rubber tube with a small inflatable bulb at one end and a squeeze-bulb at the other.

There are two approaches to the use of this gimmick.

The first approach is to have it set up so the gimmick is under the table-cloth on which you place the cloth-wrapped deck; the second is to use a handkerchief of double thickness with the palpator sewn inside for part of its length.

In either case the end with the squeeze-bulb is in your lap, and at the beginning of the proceedings you place it between your knees.

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It therefore follows that with the pack sitting on top of the inflatable bulb, it takes only a squeeze of the knees to bring about a miracle...

...if you use the palpator method, which is my favorite, I suggest that during performance—once the cards are in position—you hold the querent's hands in yours on each side of the pack. Not only is this a nice mood-setter and often fun, it clearly establishes your innocence when the miracle occurs.

Don't pass this up; try it on a human and I think you will be very pleased with the results.

NOTE

You may be lucky and find a good quality palpator, but they're often made of a cheap rubber that rots before your eyes. You can find thin rubber tubing at a hardware or auto supply store, a squeeze-bulb at a photo or art supply, and a balloon anywhere; some glue and tape and you're in business. Ah, me; the real work on palpitors!

CREDITS

All I claim here is the combination of Glorpy and the specific handling of the salt principle. Ed Marlo had an almost identical handling of the palpator and salt combination in Racherbaumer's *AT THE TABLE*⁴, which I had not seen when I originally put this into print. The salt location itself is Herbert Milton's.⁵

⁴Page 144.

⁵Marketed under the title *Sleight Of Foot*, this secret was originally thought of highly enough to be sold for \$25.00, a remarkable price, particularly for its time.

SPYRYT

CROSS-REFERENCE

Bellsamo: see *Selectrick*—page 330

Palimpsest: see *Psychic Coercion Of The Interrupted Schoolboy*—page 41

HCl: see *Hauntkerchief* and *PullBox*—page 792

THYNK

[1984]

IN PSYCHL, I gave vent to some pessimism regarding the future of mentalism as a performing art. So far no one has disagreed with that assessment, and I have seen nothing in the past year to alter that view. Though mentalism as currently performed is usually no more up-to-date than magic, its lack of props keeps this from being immediately obvious. With the possible exception of school slates (which are often used in re-creating mediumistic phenomena and thus are acceptable as period pieces), there are few equivalents in mentalism to the velvet-draped tables, garish boxes and chromed tubes of magic. However: the performing *approach* of mentalists—when they have one—has not changed appreciably in fifty years.

It has long been a thesis of mine that if a theatre-goer had been frozen in 1934, and then last week had been thawed out on the steam table in the Magic Castle kitchen and escorted in to see the show...

...more likely than not he'd have no way of knowing he had been on ice an hour, much less fifty years...!

Please note that this reaction would be just as likely if all the performers were mentalists.

I submit that there is something seriously wrong with an art form of which this is true. Our hypothetical theatre-goer would have no trouble in noting a complete change in the performance styles of singers and dancers, or even in classical productions. I was a Shakespearean actor for many years, and this involves a somewhat formalized kind of theatre; few, however, would have confused the style of our productions with that of fifty years past, even though the basic material was centuries old.

As that last point implies, I am not here talking so much about specific performance material as about the *way* in which it is presented. If you are content to regard what you do as simply a demonstration of your peculiar powers and be so regarded, fine; there are certain situations where this will work.

If, however, you regard yourself as a *performer*, an *entertainer*, and intend to work in that arena, the demands made on you—and which you should make on yourself—are much greater. It is not enough simply to be able to *demonstrate* an effect, to get through it without dropping the prop on your foot or forgetting

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what it is you're doing—there has to be something more to it, there has to be some value *other than the trick*—there has to be some reason for the audience to *care* about what you're doing. Please note that this does *not* mean that you should become a comedian. Quite aside from the fact that comedy requires a specific set of performance skills which many performers, even those brilliant in their own areas, do not possess—and that if you can do good comedy you probably should drop the mentalism, and if you do bad comedy it obviously should not be done at all—the idea of mentalism is at base a dramatic and serious one, that of supernormal occurrence, and comedy is not often the best way to establish a dramatic premise.

Certainly there is nothing wrong with comedy lines in a mentalism performance, if they grow naturally out of the situation. The use of gags and jokes, however, simply has nothing to do with what you are supposed to be; if they wanted a comedian they would have *hired* a comedian, and since they hired you it seems clear that they want to see what *you* do—not what a comedian does.

Of course you may actually want to be a 'comedy mentalist'—in which case I wish you luck. The phrase 'comedy magician' has come to mean someone who is unable to make it either as a comedian or magician and so has combined personal failures in the hope of eking out a living.

I don't think many will disagree with my judgment when I call Ricky Jay and John Thompson two of the very finest magical performers in the world. Both of them do brilliant magic and hilarious comedy—yet, because what they do could be technically described as 'comedy magic' both have had to work hard to overcome the resistance to this description. Please note that this resistance to the comedy-magician is not prejudice; it is just going along with a statistical probability.

There are so few performing mentalists that the concept of the 'comedy mentalist' has not—yet—built up this resistance; but give it time.

There's a line I've heard fairly often when hanging around with magicians, and from virtually no other kind of performer: '*Hey, I don't care what I do, as long as I entertain them...*' This kind of remark is a hallmark of the mediocre performer; if you think about it, it really translates into:

'Hey, I don't really care anything about what it is I am doing; I'm so desperate for attention, my ego is so hungry for public acclaim, that I'll do anything the audience wants.'

Now it happens that in my wanderings and adventures I have known a number of hookers-prostitutes-call girls... and most of them, on a social level, were reasonably nice people with a more than usual understanding of the vagaries of human nature. One thing for which few of them had any patience whatsoever, though, was the hooker who called herself a 'party girl' or an 'escort'. I trust you see my point.

THYNK

In all fairness I must point out a basic difference between hookers and the kind of 'performer' just described: with hookers, usually, you get what you pay for...

...I should further point out that the situation is not really as bleak as all that. It is possible to aspire to the heights, and it is possible to attain them. To cite only the most obvious example, Max Maven consistently combines strong mentalism with an effectively theatrical presentation to produce entertainment that can compete with the best show business has to offer.

So all this yammering I've been doing is not just to blow smoke in the wind; it's not just theoretical. That Max does it proves that it *can* be done.

I've gone on long enough; I could write a whole book on energy level, selection of material, background training... and if anyone out there expresses an interest I very well might.

But for now...let's proceed to the miracles...

TRI-BEAUT

Sealed envelope tests have been a mainstay of mentalism for a century, and a subset of this category—the three-envelope test—has been popular for over half that time.

There have been countless approaches to this test and to the methodology employed. What follows is an outgrowth of previous routines; it has some points of interest to set it apart from what has gone before. We'll discuss the effect and method, and then talk a little about *when* a test such as this should be performed.

EFFECT

A spectator has been invited to assist. You remove a Tarot pack from its case and spread it out on the table; the two blank cards provided with the pack you extract from the face-up spread.

You hand one of these cards to the spectator and ask her to write her birthdate on it with the pen you also provide; this done, she is to hold it face down.

You pick up a small packet of manila pay envelopes, just a bit larger than the cards, and invite her to slide the face-down card into the top envelope. When this has been done, you take the envelope from the stack and hand it to her to seal.

On your instruction she writes her zodiac sign on the other blank card; you hand her a second envelope, and she seals the card inside.

Telling her to mix the Tarot pack thoroughly, you hand her a third envelope. She is to spread the cards face down and let her finger descend and touch one card. Without looking at it, she seals this card in the third envelope. She mixes the three envelopes and puts them in a row on the table.

One of the envelopes is chosen; you sense that it contains the zodiac sign, and this you proceed to name. The envelope is opened; in fact it is the zodiac sign you have just named.

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A second envelope chosen, you instruct the spectator to place it in a brass bowl and burn it. As the flames leap high you divine the birthdate.

This leaves only the Tarot card, unknown even to the spectator; you give a brief reading concerning the divinatory meaning of the card, which you then name. When the spectator opens the envelope you are seen to be absolutely correct.

METHOD

There are a number of interesting things going on in this routine, but there are basically two points that make it worth adding to the literature.

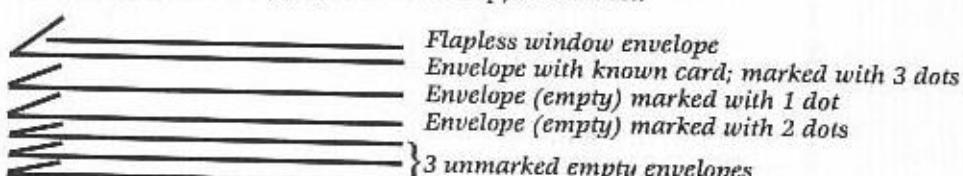
The first has to do with handling. Only at the very beginning of the routine do you hold the envelopes while the spectator inserts the card. She seals the envelope, and does all subsequent handling of cards and envelopes. From that initial point you need touch nothing involved with the effect.

The second point regards presentation. Tarot packs (specifically the Rider-Waite pack from U.S. Games Systems) are provided with a couple of blank cards, and since the *mise en scène* of fortunetelling fits in naturally with astrology and Tarot reading, the cards are brought into the presentation logically and not as a specially required prop.

The Tarot pack contains the two blank cards and is otherwise unprepared; the packet of envelopes, however, is another matter.

These are end-opening manila pay envelopes, three-by-five-inch size.

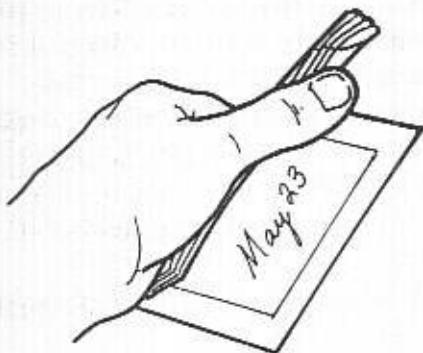
The packet is arranged, seam side up, as shown:



The clearest way to describe the procedure of the routine is in numbered steps.

1. The deck is taken from its case and spread out on the table; the two blank cards are extracted and one is handed to the spectator, who writes her birthdate on it.
2. You pick up the packet of envelopes and tell her to place her card into the envelope; that's what you say, but you actually take it and insert it into the top (gaffed) envelope.
Grasping the flap of what is actually the second envelope, you extract this envelope and hand it to the spectator to seal.
3. You hand her the other blank card and ask her to write her zodiac sign on it. While she does this you quite naturally turn away; your fingers holding the packet relax just enough to let the gaffed envelope come away bookwise from the rest of the packet long

THYNK



enough for you to get a glimpse and note the information. You then idly shift this envelope in among the lower unmarked ones, being careful not to expose its windowed condition to other spectators.

4. You give the spectator what is now the top envelope of the packet, and she seals the zodiac-sign card in it.
5. You give her the next envelope; following your instructions she mixes the Tarot pack and then seals a card from it face down and sight unseen in the last envelope. The Tarot cards and remaining envelopes are set aside.
6. The spectator mixes the three envelopes and deals them in a row on the table.

The position is now this:

Three envelopes on the table, marked No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3.

Envelope No. 1 contains the zodiac sign; you know what this is *because you know the birthdate*.

Envelope No. 2 contains an unknown Tarot card.

Envelope No. 3 contains a known Tarot card.

7. While the effect has not even begun, the actual work of the routine is now over, and the rest of the procedure is very simple:
 - a. You indicate Envelope No. 1—or have the spectator 'choose' it by equivoque—and you name the birthsign; the envelope is opened for verification.
 - b. You indicate Envelope No. 2; it is burned and you reveal the birthdate.
 - c. You name the Tarot card which you know, and the remaining envelope is opened to prove you correct.

That's the basic routine; there are some variations I want to mention, but first let's talk about where and when you do a routine like this.

I think it is ideal for a small group, particularly something along the lines of a Horoscope Party as per Bob Nelson's book of that name. It can also be used effectively as a reading routine for a single person.

As a stage routine, presented straight, I have serious doubts about it, and in this I realize I am disagreeing with many current writers on mentalism. I have my reasons.

First of all, there are a lot of preliminaries to be gone through before anything at all happens; it's in the nature of this kind of routine.

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Second, the props are really not right for stage; people can't read the writing or see what's happening and for the most part have to take the word of the spectator on stage as to the truth of what is going on.

Third, the routine thus does not directly involve the audience as a whole.

Fourth, the very props and procedure used—with this routine or any other I am familiar with—are basically the stage mentalism of half a century past. Since I was just yelling at you about this, I'm hardly going to pass over such an objection lightly.

But the solution is inherent in the objection; it is the mentalism of fifty years ago—so that's how we play it.

Without going into the specifics of my own presentation, which is part of a larger sequence, I will simply say that the routine here is done quite clearly as a period piece, a revival or re-creation of how a mentalist or psychic of the 1920's or '30's might have performed a mindpower demonstration. This way it plays as a theatrical piece which can be quaint without making you look quaint.

NOTES

It should be noted, first of all, that full decks of blank-faced cards which match the Rider-Waite Tarot pack are available from U.S. Games Systems and many game or occult shops.

Of course in this routine you burn up one Tarot card each time; given current prices that works out to about thirteen cents a performance, but there are those who may not wish to destroy a Tarot card. Here are two alternatives:

- a. Do a mis-read—i.e., you divine the birthdate as one of two 'possibles', say January fifth or sixth; *'I think it is the fifth,'* you say finally. Taking the envelope, you tear it open, glance at the face of what is actually the Tarot card the spectator chose, and continue, *'Yes, it is the fifth!'* The spectator verifies this and you continue with the routine.
- b. A blank card is loaded into the envelope and it is this one that is burned. The Tarot card is not forced but the pack is stacked and you learn the identity of the card by any one of the usual handlings.

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(A handling which I believe is new, and which is a variant of a Paul Curry idea¹, is this: a double-backer is on top of the stacked pack. The spectator cuts off a portion of the pack and turns it face up, replacing it on the pack; she removes the top card of this face-up portion and seals it in the envelope, then turns the rest of the cards face down again. This transfers the double-backer to the spot formerly occupied by the chosen card; if this double-backed card

¹See *Phoenix*, No. 130; July 18, 1947; page 524.

THYNK

has a short corner it can then be cut to the top of the pack, the face card noted and the identity of the chosen card thus learned.)

Still another approach to this would be to force the card in another way; if, for example, the preliminaries of a simple crossing-the-cut force were done at the beginning of the routine, and the writing and sealing of the other two envelopes was done, it would give enough of a time-lag for the force to play correctly.

When you are doing this specifically as a close-up or parlor fortunetelling piece rather than as a stage item, a force of the Tarot card is mandatory. Why? Simply because you don't want the spectator getting a card of obvious unpleasant portent.

You might also consider adapting the *Day-For-Any-Date* angle to this routine, as described earlier on page 188.

CREDITS

As indicated previously, the history of this test is a long one, and a bit cloudy; however, some parts of it can be traced. The flapless window envelope handling comes from Annemann's *Modernized Reading*²; the card force aspect derives from Basil Horwitz' *Challenge Thought*³, which in turn is descended from an Al Mann item in Nelson's *SENSATIONAL MENTALISM, PART TWO*⁴, which in turn comes from an Al Baker billet handling⁵. I used a similar handling of the Baker concept in some billet work published in *Magick*⁶ about a decade ago, which was subsequently absorbed into *SCRIPT* (see page 180). The zodiac-birthdate bit is from my *Trinkle* (page 188).

²ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 130.

³THE MENTAL MAGICK OF BASIL HORWITZ, page 49.

⁴Page 46.

⁵See his MENTAL MAGIC, page 80.

⁶No. 97, Bonus Insert; page 485.

ZODIACCENT

In my *Zodaxis* on page 265, I described a method of coding any of the twelve zodiac signs to a partner at the other end of a phone line. An important point in that routine was that the name and phone number of the medium were known to the observers in advance of the selection of the zodiac sign.

This is another approach to that same problem.

EFFECT

"I have a friend," you say, *"who has a peculiar gift for tuning in on my thoughts from time to time. Let's try a test with him."* You scribble something down on a piece of paper and drop it writing side up on the table. It says:

Bob Koch 555-6789

Any sign of the zodiac is selected, and any spectator may call the number and ask to speak to your medium—who instantly names the selected zodiac sign.

METHOD

The working of this very straightforward effect hinges on the curious fact that the name Koch can be pronounced in six different ways. If we add to this the option of using Bob or Robert, we have twelve possibilities, thus:

<u>BOB</u>	<u>ROBERT</u>
Aries	Kotch
Taurus	Coach
Gemini	Cook
Cancer	Coke
Leo	Cosh
Virgo	Kosh
	Aquarius (rhymes with gosh)
	Pisces (as in kosher)

THYNK

The sign having been selected, you watch the spectator as she dials; when she completes dialing you say, "Just ask for Bob Kotch, please." When the phone is answered the spectator will quite naturally use the form and pronunciation you just used.

Bob shoves a few fallen blocks aside and looks at his chart as given above, and knows the sign is *Aries*.

NOTES

Do not have the name prewritten or on a printed card; it thus makes sense for you to abbreviate the Robert to Bob in the writing that you do.

Your medium can, of course, be female—Bobbi or Roberta, Kim or Kimberly, Toni or Antonia, etc.

CREDITS

The telephone trick is the invention of John Northern Hilliard⁷. In *Phoenix*⁸ Alan Barnert described a method where the name was *pronounced* the same but *spelled* in different ways; my method is, in a sense, a reversal of this approach.

⁷See *The Sphinx*, Vol. 3, No. 12; Feb. 1905; page 150.

⁸No. 108; June 21, 1946; page 433.

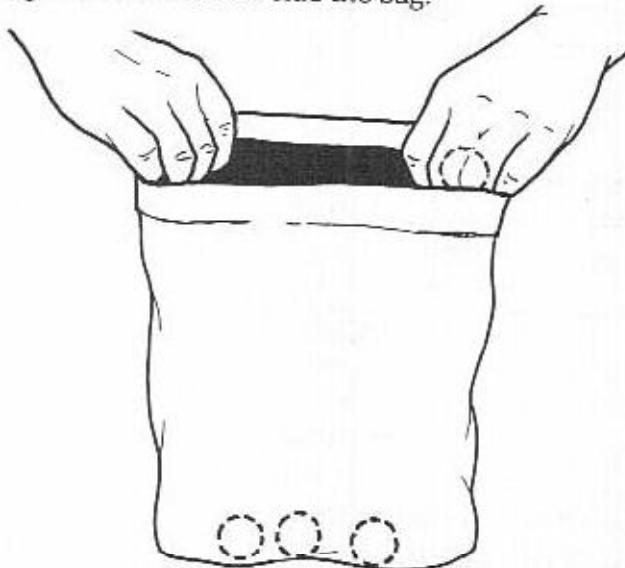
VERBALL

What follows is not an effect as such, though I will give suggestions along that line. It is simply a handling for a particular kind of force.

In effect you have a bag containing four different colored balls. Three spectators each choose one, yet you are left with the one you require.

It's a combination of a bit of chicanery and an interesting use of equivoque, and it goes this way:

Let's say you want to force the red ball; the other three are green, yellow and blue. You remove them from the bag (which should be of fairly heavy and opaque material) and show them; in dumping them back into the bag your thumb goes over the red ball and holds it back. The two hands now hold the bag, fingers inside, at the corners; the red ball is concealed beneath the fingers of one hand inside the bag.



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The first two spectators choose balls from among the three available, and they don't really have time to notice that there is one less ball than there should be. When this has been done you *hand the bag* to the third spectator; as you do this you let the red ball drop to the bottom of the bag.

The verbiage here is important: you say, "Just two balls left... of course I get to keep one ball... so would you take one out, please?"

He does so. If it is the red ball you take it from him and say, "*Thank you... and what ball do you have?*" You nod at the bag and he takes out the ball. You have started to extend your hand toward him as he does this. If he has the ball you want you continue with the motion to take the ball.

If he takes out the other ball you simply continue the motion to *take the bag* from him. From the bag you take your red ball, and toss the bag aside. This seems in keeping with what has gone before and is quite natural.

This does not play as equivoque at all.

As you will appreciate, this handling means that you can force any one of the four balls, as required by whatever effect you're involved in doing.

NOTES

This force is usually employed in the context of some kind of *Bank Night* or similar effect; here you might have four different colored boxes, and the spectator would get to keep the prize he found in the box matching his colored ball.

Do bear in mind that here we're dealing with a one-out-of-four chance, which is hardly deep mystery, so other aspects of the routine—gag gifts in the boxes, for example—have to carry the freight.

After some thought I will give you here a gag I have used in connection with this—but you have to pick your spots; in the right circumstances it will get a great reaction, in other places it'll die the death.

When the third spectator is holding the bag, you place two fingers under the bottom of it and say, "*Would you turn your head to the side and cough?*"...

...all right, all right; I said you have to pick your spots.

One point about this bit—if you do it for a mixed group you will have to expect a diminution of attention for the next few moments, because many women quite understandably won't get the reference and will ask the men they're with to explain it to them.

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CREDITS

Some years ago Ken DeCourcy marketed through the Supreme Magic Co. an item called Eliminator which was similar in effect to the above but which required switches and extra balls in clips. Too, only one specific ball could be forced from a particular setup.

GLOWSCURE

Here, again, a presentational angle rather than an effect as such—here it is of the spectator-as-mindreader type.

You have a number of small containers; in one a man seals a small personal object. The containers are placed in a bag and the lady accompanying the gentleman is asked to choose from among them the one she feels might contain the object. She does so and, of course, is correct.

The method isn't mine—it's that of the late Syd Bergson. He had a marketed item called *Clairvoyance*; it used a number of containers which were identical but had a useful characteristic. After exposure to light they would glow in the dark.

Thus a container taken from the darkness of the bag for the time it took to place an object into it would be exposed to bright light. Replaced in the bag, it was easily spotted among its fellows.

A very nice effect, but it had the drawback which I addressed in *Verball*; there were only half-a-dozen containers, and for the mentalist to find the correct one didn't strike me as much of anything to get excited about.

If, however, we have the *spectator* do the locating—and if, as often will happen, the spectator really thinks she is doing it by psychic means—then it becomes something with interesting possibilities.

In using the Bergson effect this way, you should not leave the 'object-container' out in the light any longer than necessary. What you want is a subtle glow that the spectator might think is in her own mind as she looks into the bag—you don't want the container shining like a light bulb.

I suggest the presentation given above because it lends itself to a 'psychic-compatibility' approach which can be very

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appealing; it is, in fact, the presentational basis of *Synsign* and *Courtship*, to be found further on in this section.

CREDITS

There have been many effects which used luminosity as a cuing device, but this particular approach is, as was noted, Syd Bergson's. There have been a number of unauthorized copies on the market from various sources.

GLOWSOUT

If we combine the two preceding items it will produce an interesting effect which might go this way.

EFFECT

You show a small amulet or charm which, you say, protects its possessor from loss. You let a spectator hold it; in return she loans you some small but valued object which you place in one of the containers. These are then mixed in the cloth bag and a number of spectators are each asked to choose one.

The one you end up with is handed to the lady and, sure enough, it contains her item.

METHOD

By the glow you spot which of the containers has the item after the mixing; you scoop out the containers and as you let them fall back into the bag you hold this one back and then proceed as in *Verball*.

Since the containers are identical there is a slight variation in handling. When only one container remains in the bottom of the bag you let it move into one corner, and then release the held-back container so that it falls into the *opposite* corner. In this way it will be easy to note which of the two the spectator takes out.

CREDITS

As above.

SPEAKAY

This is one of my favorites, since it is a very strong visual effect created almost entirely by what you say rather than any physical chicanery.

EFFECT

The situation is that you are doing any one of the many Who-Has-What card psychometry routines. For example, six spectators have written words on cards and you are going to attempt to divine which word belongs to which person, by some application of psychology or graphology or what-have-you.

At some point you suddenly decide to try an experiment in distant influence. Selecting one of the cards, you look at the word on it—and then explain that of the six spectators on the stage, one will eventually feel an impulse to step forward.

This, in fact, happens; one of the spectators does step out from the others. *"I was thinking of the word..."* you glance down at the card, *"...coprophagous. What word did you write down?"*

The spectator who moved forward answers, *"Coprophagous."*

METHOD

It's very simple and a complete swindle. The cards are, of course, marked, as is usual in these routines, so you know who wrote which word. As you look the cards over you memorize the words, associating them with their writers. You then pick out any one of the cards and seemingly concentrate on it.

The six spectators know that one of them is expected to step forward—so, sooner or later, one of them will. When this happens you recall the word he wrote and, looking down at the card, you simply *misread* it, calling out the appropriate memorized word. That's all there is to it.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

Of course one out of six times you will actually be holding the correct card, and you have the option of handing it to the spectator if you so desire.

Please note that the effect is *not* that you guess which of six cards is the one written by a spectator that will step out; that's a prediction effect and not a particularly impressive one.

No; what you're doing here is using a word as a mental focus to enable you to reach out and physically influence someone to move, a far more interesting and difficult feat.

CREDITS

L. Vosburgh Lyons' *Graphology* in *The Jinx*⁹ is a reference, and there have been any number of card-psychometry routines in print both prior to its appearance and subsequently.

⁹No. 74; Jan. 6, 1940; page 493.

CARDBLANCHE

This is one of my more peculiar ones—not in that it is particularly strange or bizarre, but that it seems to me a very obvious and likely thought—yet I have never seen it in print.

It's a utility item; to explain it I will give an example.

EFFECT

You have a rubber-banded stack of blank white cards, from which you take those as needed for various effects—as, for example, *Speakay* just described.

At some point, perhaps in the middle of another effect, you ask a spectator her birthdate, presumably to assist you in divining a thought. She tells you: "October tenth." With an odd expression you pick up the stack of white cards and remove the rubber band, perhaps mumbling under your breath about having made a note earlier. You begin to look through the cards and it is seen that they are, of course, blank on both sides. One card, however, has some writing on it. You pass this to the spectator and ask her to read it aloud. She does: "*Today a woman who assists me will be one who was born the second week of October.*"

METHOD

What you've got here is simply a double-blank Brainwave-type deck. There are fifty-two cards arranged in pairs. Each of the cards has one roughed face on which a message has been written; it is paired with another card so that the two messages are face to face, resulting in what appears to be a single blank card.

The cards are arranged according to a logical system; in the effect described, the cards which would show their messages when pairs are split would cover the first, second, third and last weeks for the months of January through June. With the deck turned over the months would run from July through December.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

As with the standard Brainwave Deck, you simply count through the sequence to know when to split a pair. Brainwave Decks often make use of dots in the corners to help you to know where you are in the sequence, but those would be too noticeable on an all-white card. Instead, you use an eraser to remove a spot of the glossy finish from the card. The resultant dull spot is clearly visible if you're looking for it, but does not stand out.

In splitting the pair to reveal the required message, some care must be taken not to show the under-surface of the upper card of the pair, but this presents no real difficulties.

Given a pack of double-blanks prepared in this manner, we have a way of duplicating any number of effects that formerly needed the use of pocket indexes. You can, obviously, make a prediction that can have any one of fifty-two different outcomes.

However—and this is important—do not use it to predict the name of a playing card. More than that, don't use this item in the same show with any effect using regular playing cards. You don't want to remind the audience of playing cards, or give them any reason to think along the lines of these being just 'blank playing cards'—you want them to be regarded as something you might have picked up in a stationery store.

For the same reason, you have them on the table with a rubber band or paper strip around them—you don't have them in a card box and certainly not in the playing card case they might have come in.

One of the nice things about this is that it is a sort of camouflaged 'out'—by which I mean that you have been using (extra) cards from the pack all along, so the pack just sits there naturally in plain view. If you need one of its outs, it's there—if you don't, no one attaches any importance to it.

Obviously *Cardblanche* can be applied to dozens of effects, and it would hardly be feasible to even begin to list them all. It is, as mentioned, a utility device that can be used either for an effect of its own or as a 'saver' for another effect in the program that has some hazard attached to it. It should be noted that if the message consists of a single word, rather than a sentence as previously described, this can be written in felt-tip marker with fairly large letters and thus be visible for fair-sized audiences.

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NOTES

The roughing fluid should be put on the cards first, and then the messages written—if you do it the other way around the writing is apt to smear.

The best way to apply roughing fluid for most uses is not with a cotton swab but with a spray. One can buy aerosol roughing fluid, but an inexpensive alternative is an artist's sprayer or a plant misting device. Using either of these applicators, you must return the unused fluid to the bottle after use—it will evaporate otherwise—and clean the sprayer with alcohol or lighter fluid.

THYNK

(NOTE 1993: You might consider having your business cards printed on double-blank playing card stock, and using these. Note that in the current application the top card of the pair would be printed on its upper side and have the message written on the lower, while the bottom card would have the message written on the printed side and the lower side would be left blank. This way, as you first spread the cards, one side would show all printing and the other blank, as would logically be the case.)

(Note also that you don't have to use all fifty-two cards; depending on the effect a smaller number can be used, as for example a packet of two dozen to cover the signs of the zodiac.)

CREDITS

The Brainwave Deck, in its current form, is the invention of Dai Vernon.

SYNSIGN

Speaking of Dai Vernon—what follows uses one move of his invention to create a pleasant little interlude.

EFFECT

You are seated at a table with two couples. You point out that you do not know the birthsigns of anyone there—but that you'd like to try a little experiment in synchronicity.

You have been shuffling a deck of cards. Addressing one of the women, you say that you are going to spread through the cards one by one, calling off the zodiac signs in order as you do so; she is to stop you when you name her sign.

This you proceed to do; let us say her sign is *Leo*, and thus she stops you on the fifth card. You outjog this card and, leaving it projecting, continue naming the rest of the signs of the zodiac through *Pisces*.

Turning to her companion, you repeat this process with him, and with the other two people at the table, resulting in four cards projecting from the deck. You remove these cards, square them and set the rest of the deck aside. You wonder aloud if their zodiac signs have influenced the cards, and if the cards can reveal their compatibility. The four cards are put face down in front of the spectators whose signs each symbolizes and they are asked to turn them face up. The first woman has the Queen of Hearts; her companion, the King of Hearts; the second woman, the Queen of Diamonds; her companion, the King of Diamonds.

Thus you have, by some weird kind of logic, demonstrated an astrological-cartomantic compatibility for each couple.

THYNK

METHOD

Obvious enough; the four cards—King of Hearts, Queen of Hearts, King of Diamonds and Queen of Diamonds—are on the bottom of the deck, and your shuffle is careful not to disturb them.

In removing the outjogged cards and squaring them, you simply switch them for the four bottom cards of the pack: this is accomplished with Dai Vernon's BDV move. I am quite fond of this sleight since it has a completely natural appearance, and there are several descriptions of it in this volume (see pages 35 and 201). You use it to switch the selected cards for the four court cards on the bottom of the deck, after which the deck is set aside as the four cards in the left hand are spread—presumably the four cards previously outjogged.

That's really all there is to the effect, from a technical point of view.

I should point out that this is not to be presented as a miracle of mentalism or a deep mystery; its plot is such that few would be likely to believe such an approach. You really don't make any claims for it, other than your opening lines about compatibility and synchronicity.

A lot of people won't believe this dialogue, either, but it doesn't matter—because people like the *idea* of the effect: they are pleased with the notion that the cards prove they were meant for each other. An effect like this may not make them want to kiss your ring, but it will make them happy—and that can be quite something to accomplish.

NOTES

One funny technical point about this is that since you go through the twelve zodiac signs four times, you can only deal through forty-eight cards and thus never into your four-card packet.

It should be pointed out that the Vernon sleight described is one of the few that can be used with equal deceptiveness with a standard Tarot pack; thus we can envision variants in which the birthsigns would indicate cards of obvious good fortune.

COURTSHIP

Here's another presentation along the lines just described: this one, however, is intended for club or stage work.

EFFECT

You show four small sealed envelopes, marked A, B, C and D. Setting them aside for a moment, you remove four cards from a pack and show them to be the four Queens.

You mix these and then allow four ladies to each choose one. They do not show these to you or to the gentlemen with them.

Picking up the four envelopes, you ask one of the men to choose a letter—A, B, C or D. He does so and you hand him the envelope bearing that letter. This is repeated with the other three men.

The women show which Queens they have chosen. When the men open their envelopes it is seen that each envelope contains a playing card, a King—and in each case the man's King is a match in suit for the Queen his companion holds.

METHOD

The four lettered envelopes you show at the beginning are dummies; you exhibit them and then set them down on the table or in your case next to another set of four envelopes.

This other set has no lettering on it but each envelope is marked with a pencil dot to indicate the King it holds.

Right beside this packet (concealed by another prop if necessary) is a Listo™ or other crayon thumb-writer.

The four Queens you remove from the pack (or have ready separately) are marked for suit; these marks should be easy to read. Thus when the four Queens have been distributed you know which woman holds each suit.

THYNK

As you pick up the unmarked packet of envelopes from the table your thumb goes naturally into the writer. You ask one of the men to nominate a letter; when he does so you spread the envelopes and bring to the top the one containing the King that will match the Queen held by the woman with him. You use the thumb-writer to mark the envelope with the named letter and then hand it to him. This is repeated with the other three men and the effect is concluded with the revelation of the match of the four suits.

NOTES

In those cases where the two letters first called are A and B you can thumb-write a C on both the remaining envelopes: this done, either can be transformed into a D simply by adding a straight line and turning the envelope around (this is an idea of mine improved by Phil Goldstein).

An alternative method for learning which woman holds which of the suits would be to use *Handbook*, described on page 496.

In the interests of uniformity of appearance, the letters on the dummy set of envelopes first shown should also be written with the thumb-writer.

What I said about *Synsign* applies in somewhat lesser degree to this effect; though from a pure mentalism aspect *Courtship* is stronger, you would still be wise to sell this not so much on its mystery—which is considerable—as on its charm, which can be quite considerable.

CREDITS

There have been a number of routines in print which employ this general method. To the best of my knowledge, the first such was a Bank Night routine, *No Chance At All!*, originated by Basil Horwitz.¹⁰

¹⁰New Pentagram, Vol. 3, No. 3; May 1971; page 22.

GROUPEASE

I have always had a soft spot in my heart for that genre of mental card effects where several spectators think of cards from among those in packets they hold.

Unfortunately, the methods of many of these have left more than a little to be desired. Such effects as Baker's Vocalepathy and its many later variations—Paul Fox's Miracle Gimmick, Louis Histed's *Miracle Divination*¹¹, etc.—while intriguing and ingenious in method have never really seemed to me to be really convincing. Puzzling, baffling, yes;—convincing, no.

It remained for Ed Marlo to come up with a really workable approach to this problem in his *A Miracle With Cards* which appeared in an early *Ibidem*¹². While it does not hew to the idea of a *mental* selection, its simplicity in working makes up for that. In what follows I must stress that I have not deviated from his excellent method, but simply have added a bit more chicanery and some handling touches for those who would like to use it as a stage piece.

EFFECT

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From your shuffled deck five spectators cut off small packets of cards and note the card at the face of their packet; the groups of cards are then shuffled by the spectators. You collect the packets, give the deck a further shuffle, and then run through the cards as you exhort the spectators to concentrate. In the fullness of time you remove five cards and hand them to the selectors; these are, of course, the five thought-of cards.

¹¹See Fabian's MAGIC OF LOUIS S. HISTED, page 41.

¹²No 8; Dec. 1956; page 11.

THYNK

METHOD

The deck is in a memorized stack, by which I mean that you must know which card is at any numerical position.

Also, the deck is of the one-way variety, both on backs *and* faces, so that you can instantly tell if a card has been reversed end for end. On the back, a bit of the design can be scraped away or blocked out; on the face, a bit of one index pip is scraped away with a pin or razor blade.

In having the packets cut off, you work with seated spectators. Five spectators are used; for the *second* and *fourth* packets you use spectators seated in the *second* row, for a reason we will get to in a moment.

The five packets cut off, you instruct each spectator to look at the card on the face of his or her packet and then to shuffle or mix the cards. You illustrate this with the cards you hold; you grip them in both hands by the long

sides (in similar fashion to the standard twisting-grip used for the Elmsley count) and mix them from this position, explaining that this prevents anyone from getting a look at any of their cards. Actually it is so they'll be much less likely to reverse the packet than they would be if they were to overhand shuffle it.

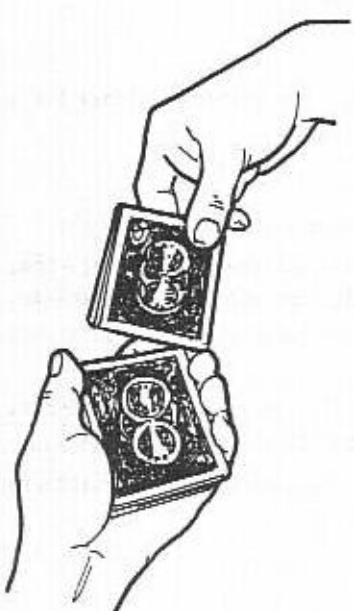
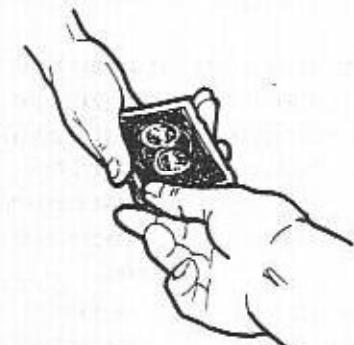
As they comply with your instructions you casually reverse your own packet of remaining cards end for end.

When the spectators have finished this task, you reclaim the packet from the first spectator, replacing it on the rest of the deck; if the spectator has not changed its orientation it will be reversed in relation to the rest of the cards.

You must reach for the second packet, since the person is in the second row; you grip it by its near end at your fingertips and in replacing it on the pack your hand naturally curls inward, so that this second packet is replaced reversed in relation to the packet below it.

In like manner the third packet is replaced without turning it; the fourth packet (again from row two) is replaced reversed, and the last packet replaced without the turn.

Thus the deck is now divided into six groups alternating in direction: your remainder-packet on the bottom, followed by the packets one, two, three and four, and packet five on top.



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You now give the deck a *convincing* false shuffle, just as you may have done at the beginning of the effect. This done, turn the cards to face you and begin to spread through them.

The group at the face is your remainder; you ignore them. When you get to the first group, you count the number of cards in this packet. If there are eight cards, you know that the first spectator looked at the eighth card in your memorized stack!

You continue the count from this number for the second group; if it contains seven cards, you'll obviously reach fifteen, which gives you the identity of the second card looked at.

You continue in this way to discover the other three chosen, pardon me, *thought-of* cards.

NOTES

The cards are marked on the back so that you can tell if a spectator has inadvertently reversed the packet; if he has, by the way you replace it you can correct its positioning.

A bit of business you might find useful is to set the deck aside for a moment after the packets have been collected and ask each spectator to concentrate on his or her card. You go down the line, glaring at each one in turn and then relaxing; then you pick up the deck and proceed. The concept of this bit of dramatics is to get across the idea that you know what the cards are *before* you look through the deck, so you may embellish it with whatever theatrical curlicues you think will help to get this to play in convincing fashion.

It is theoretically possible to do this with a cue-list on the face of the bottom card of the deck—but I really don't recommend it. Knowledge of a memorized deck is a useful tool, and it really isn't that much work.

CREDITS

As indicated, Marlo for the nucleus of the method; the pip-scratching for a one-way deck marked on the face is Annemann's.¹³



With the aid of a special deck, this effect can be done even more simply.

The deck is one that you have stacked in your favorite arrangement—this should not be a cyclic stack—and then marked with the Ted Lesley Working Performer's Marked Deck materials—but you mark each card not for its own identity, but rather that of the *card directly above it*.

Thus when a spectator cuts off a packet of cards, the top card of the portion you hold reveals the name of the card on the face of the spectator's packet. This is simply an updating of a concept of Herbert Hood's which appeared in *The Jinx*¹⁴.

¹³ *The Jinx*, Summer Extra 1935; page 42.

¹⁴ No. 136; Apr. 30, 1941; page 775.

TWINNER

Here follow three effects with family similarities: they are intended as alternatives, however, and it's neither feasible nor desirable to perform them together.

EFFECT

Picking up a cased deck of cards, you use it as a rest while you scribble something on one of your business cards; the card is set aside for a moment and you hand the spectator a slip of paper on which he is to write the name of any card in the deck.

He does so and pockets the paper. You remove the cards from the case, pointing out that you do not alter their order in any way. Handing the deck to the spectator, you invite him to deal the cards face up from the top of the deck, counting aloud as he does so, until he reaches his thought-of card. Following your instructions, he deals until he reaches his card: say, the Ace of Clubs; it is the twenty-third card dealt.

Anyone picks up your business card; it reads, "*The thought-of card will be found at position 23 in the deck.*"

METHOD

There are no new principles here—the interesting aspect is in the way the time sequence works out.

When you write your prediction on the card, you leave the space for the number blank. The spectator writes the name of any card on a slip of paper and uses the card case as a writing rest (as he has just seen you do). This is a Mental Masterpiece case which takes an impression of the spectator's writing; when you used it you rested the card on the opposite side of the case.

While he writes, you turn away, giving you the opportunity to put on your nail-writer or Boon (if you haven't already).

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When you remove the deck from the case you note the card written by the spectator, allowing the impression device to drop back into the case. You place the cards in front of the spectator and—presumably to get it out of the way—you pick up your business card. As you set it aside you use the nail-writer to note down the position which, thanks to a memorized setup, you know.

Thus your prediction is on the table even before the spectator *begins* to make the count-and-deal; it is this point, combined with everything else that's going on, which gives the effect its aura of seeming impossibility.

CREDITS

The Mental Masterpiece case is Annemann's concept.¹⁵

¹⁵See ANNEMANN'S MENTAL BARGAIN EFFECTS, page 5.

TWINDOW

EFFECT

Two decks—one red, one blue—are in their cases; one is selected by a spectator. Removing the deck from its case, she cuts off a portion of the deck and places it on the table; you turn away as she takes the next card, deals it face up onto the tabled portion, and puts the rest of the deck on top of the face-up card, squaring the deck. You turn back to face the spectators.

A second spectator is instructed to take the other deck out of its case and hold it in dealing position. The two spectators now deal their cards simultaneously and both stop when the first spectator's face-up card appears.

You draw attention to a small sealed envelope which has been lying on the table all this time. Picking it up you tear off one end and dump its contents—a business card—into the hand of another spectator who is asked to read it aloud.

He reads: "*The chosen card will be matched at position 17 in the deck.*" The spectators have been counting aloud, as in the previous effect, so everyone knows that at least one part of the prophecy is correct. When the second spectator turns over the top card of those remaining in his hand it is seen that the cards are indeed identical.

METHOD

Both decks are marked on the back; both also are stacked in a memorized order, and then one is dealt through to reverse the order—so that its bottom card matches the top card of the other deck.

Although it is possible to work with an actual free choice of deck, you'll find it simpler to equivoque the deck in which the top card of the face-down pack is No. One in your memorized order. The first spectator gets this deck and makes the selection as previously described.

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You'll recall you have been turned away during this selection procedure. Now you turn back and as you do so you look at the pack just cut by the spectator and note by its markings the identity of the top card.

Whatever its numerical position in your memorized stack, you subtract that from *fifty-four*; the *remainder* is the position at which the chosen card will be matched.

An example, using the Nikola stack¹⁶: You note the top card as being the Eight of Diamonds. This is position twenty-one in the Nikola stack. $54 - 21 = 33$ —thus the match will occur at the thirty-third position in the deck.

The pay envelope, with a window cut out of its underside, is lying on the table; you pick it up as you instruct the spectators in their dual deal. It is but the work of a moment to fill in the prediction through the window in the usual fashion with your nail-writer or Boon—and then you set the envelope down. Apparently you've just been toying with it, and thus far you have not drawn any specific attention to it at all.

The decided advantage of handling things this way is that, as with the previous effect, the major part of the dirty work is over before anything apparently has happened. The spectators deal down as instructed and now, with no pause or hesitation at all, you can pick up the envelope, rip off one end and dump the card into a spectator's hand.

Thus the prediction is read aloud by the spectator, the card atop the other deck is turned over and seen to match, and the effect brought to a conclusion.

Given the reverse-stacking principle, the card will of course always be matched by its duplicate in the other deck.

(NOTE 1993: Stephen Minch has pointed out to me that, if you mark the deck for *card-position* rather than for *card-identity* [an idea of Ed Marlo's¹⁷], you can eliminate the mental step of translating the card into its memorized position. Instead, you simply read the number on the back of the top card of the deck and subtract this from 54.)

CREDITS

Paul Curry's *Power Of Thought* was the prime inspiration for this type of effect; however, *Twindow* and its brethren are more heavily influenced by the methodology used by Eddie Joseph in his *Staggered* card routine.

¹⁶See Hugard's *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARD TRICKS*, page 385.

¹⁷See *Pallbearers Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3; Jan. 1968; page 152.

TWIN SOME

— And if you *really* want to live dangerously, try this one...

EFFECT

Again two decks are used. A spectator writes a number from one to fifty-two on a slip of paper which he pockets. Removing one of the decks from its case, you have a spectator choose a card, note it and replace it. The deck is put down on the table and you have another spectator remove the other deck from its case and hold it in dealing position.

You instruct the spectator who wrote the number to stop you when you've dealt to the number he selected. The spectator who selected the card is likewise to call out stop if and when her card shows in the face-up pile you deal.

You and the other spectator deal the cards simultaneously; suddenly both spectators shout stop at the *same time!* One spectator's card has come up at the other spectator's number! And not only that, but it is matched by the card dealt at the same time from the other deck!

METHOD

This isn't easy, and there are some times you can't do it no matter how good you are...

...but here goes. By now you will have figured that one deck is in reverse order to the other, and that the spectator who writes the number does so on a Mental Masterpiece case so that in removing the cards you can note the thought-of number.

As before, it's a memorized stack; but this time the one you take out of the case has Card No. One as its bottom, or face, card.

Let's say the spectator wrote 25 on his slip of paper; in possession of this information via the impression device, you

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approach another spectator. The twenty-fifth card in Nikola is the Seven of Clubs; you can estimate this position, get a break and glimpse to see where you are, or you can simply spread the cards face up to show 'all is fair' and spot the card that way.

Now you simply classic force the card on the second spectator...

...which means you have to be expert at the classic force, obviously. This isn't an effect that gives you much leeway in that respect.

There's only one other little bit of chicanery, and it is quite simple. The spectator notes the card; you have, meanwhile, kept the halves of the pack separated at the point where the card was taken. Now you proffer the original top half of the deck, and the spectator replaces her card on top of these cards; you then place the cards in your other hand onto the selection.

Thus the halves of the deck are transposed around the chosen card. This done, the effect will conclude as described.

NOTES

In choosing numbers from one through fifty-two, spectators tend to stay around the middle range, which is fine for our purposes here; there will be times, however, when the spectator will give a position among the top or bottom dozen cards, and it is quite difficult to do a convincing classic force from this position.

In such cases you simply segue into a variation of the kind of effect popularized by Ken Krenzel as *It Can't Be*—in other words you force the card that will match the chosen position in *the other deck*. Anyone deals the cards from that pack and the second spectator's card is found at the first spectator's number.

Using the reverse-stack principle here described, there will be situations where cards other than the chosen one will match: if this should happen don't try to hide it. You may simply ignore it or, if you choose, note it and make a comment about the rarity of such a coincidence.

CREDITS

As indicated previously in text.

TRANCEPLANT

In this very peculiar effect a spectator seems to acquire psychic powers—but from his point of view it's an hallucination that you've somehow planted in his mind!

EFFECT

You invite a spectator on stage and give him a seat: this done, you mark his initials on one side of a school slate and have him write on the other side any word of six letters or less that comes into his mind. You caution him not to let anyone in the audience see what he's written.

When the spectator has done this you place the slate on a small easel where it is in full view of everyone.

Now you show a paperback book of over two hundred pages; from this another spectator chooses a word in what seems a very fair manner.

You ask, somewhat rhetorically, if it is possible that in some way the first spectator could predict the word chosen by the second; then you ask this second spectator to name the word chosen by her.

She does so and you turn the slate around. On it is the very same word!

However, the effect is not over. As you congratulate the first spectator on his psychic abilities, you seem to note something odd about his manner. *"Is there,"* you benignly inquire, *"anything wrong?"*

The spectator answers that the word revealed is not the one he wrote on the slate. *"Oh?"* you blandly respond. *"Tell me, what word do you think you wrote?"*

He responds with, say, *"Clock,"*—whereupon you draw attention to your breast pocket, from the top of which an envelope visibly projects. Removing it, you tear off the end, extract the white card it holds and hand it to the spectator to read aloud.

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It reads (for example):

"I will induce you to correctly predict board as the word that will be chosen—but I will also influence you to forget it and imagine yourself to have written an entirely different word—the word clock. Signed _____."

METHOD

What this boils down to is three effects—the prediction of a word on a slate, the prediction of another word in an envelope, and the change of writing on a slate—melded into a single (and singular) effect.

The word which is eventually shown to be on the slate is forced; to do this you find a book where the same word appears as the first word on several different left-hand pages. This accomplished—and it isn't too difficult to do, just tedious—you alter the book so you will be able to stop a riffle at that point. This can be done by sticking a business card into the book, next to the binding (my approach) or trimming the edge of the next few pages (Al Mann's). I prefer mine (surprise!) because there's no visible alteration of the book.

This force word is written on the slate proper, which is then covered with a flap.

The prediction shown at the conclusion is of course in a window envelope, the window cut in the proper position to allow you to use a thumb-writer to fill in the word the spectator wrote.

Note that, as with previous routines in this section, you have the necessary information for this prediction far in advance—the spectator hides his writing from the audience, not from you—and thus you could if you wish take the envelope from your pocket early on and fill it in as you put it on the easel beside the slate.

You get rid of the flap by the time-honored expedient of putting it down on the table for a moment while you erect the easel or show the book. This table should be above the seated spectator's eye-level so the flap won't be visible to him (though he'd probably not realize what it was if he did see it).

The routine should be clear: you place the spectator's initials on the non-flap side of the slate. He writes a word on the flap side as *you hold the slate*. You get rid of the flap (you have noted its word) and put the slate on the easel.

Picking up the book, you approach a spectator and ask her to call stop as you riffle the pages. Given the previous preparation, no matter when she calls stop you can halt the riffle at one of the force pages; you instruct the spectator to note the first word on the page. The book is then set aside, and from then on you talk about "*the word thought of*" rather than the word chosen from a book.

At any point you prefer you can take the envelope from your pocket and do the fill-in with your thumb-writer, after which you can place it on the easel with the slate or not, as you choose.

It only remains to bring this very strange effect to its conclusion.

THYNK

NOTES

Since we're dealing here with something as peculiar as 'suggested hallucinatory amnesia and prophecy', piled on top of a prediction effect—a tough sell in itself—I feel that an effect like this should only be presented by a performer of very strong and forceful personality. It definitely should *not* be done by the 'anyone could do what I do' kind of mentalist—no way could the audience do something like this, and they damn well know it—and if the audience doesn't think the performer can *really* do it, then obviously it's a magic trick. If you are going to do magic tricks there are a lot of better choices—if you are going to do strong mentalism (and can bring it off), I think you'll find this a worthwhile performance piece.

I've considered using a variant of the Gysel slate handling¹⁸ in this:

You have another slate with *your* initials on it. You mention that there's something written on the other side which you will reveal presently. Taking the spectator's slate (after he's written his word) you slide it down in front of yours—but your fingers holding the flap relax slightly so that it separates from the spectator's slate and goes behind your own slate, where the fingers of your other hand position it in the frame.

Both slates are now placed on the easel and the effect is concluded along the same lines as earlier, here with your slate acting as your prophecy of 'what the spectator thought he had written'...

...the spectator, at your direction, has *printed* his word on the slate, so the handwriting wouldn't be a giveaway—and this version has somewhat more visibility—but I like the specific tone of the prediction in the primary version. I offer this variation as food for thought.

(NOTE 1993: It isn't difficult to devise a handling of the primary routine where, after the spectator has written his word as you hold the slate, you place it down without looking at it, and later move it to another spot. You leave the flap behind, of course, and later glimpse it. Thus you would apparently never know the spectator's written word until he announces it; interesting, but I don't know that it's worth the trouble.)

See page 355 of this book, for details on the handling and timing of the word force.

CREDITS

I developed this in 1975, but this (1984) is the first time it has seen print. There have been many routines on the 'Hallucination' theme, including Eddie Clever's card effect of that name in *The Jinx*¹⁹. The word force techniques are, as mentioned, by Al Mann²⁰ and myself.

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¹⁸ See page 166 of ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS.

¹⁹ No. 1; Oct. 1934; page 1.

²⁰ See SENSATIONAL MENTALISM, PART FOUR, edited by Micky Hades, pages 7 through 10; or Mann's OF WORDS AND WIZARDS, page 15.

CHRONOLOGIC

Longer ago than I care to remember, as a tad in Columbus, Ohio, I used to trek up the rickety stairs to Syl Reilly's magic shop. Syl shared that second floor with a gunsmith, and I spent many hours in rapt attention as they discussed the ins and outs and secrets of their crafts. I learned from both that you must have respect for what you're doing or, sooner or later, it'll turn on you—though in the case of Syl's magic the results would be somewhat less lethal...!

From time to time he would sell me a prop—once he was sure I could use it properly—and I only realized years later that he was charging me far less than the item was worth. From him I bought my first set of Dr. Q Slates and many other wonderful effects.

It was in that Aladdin's cave that I first was introduced to the mysteries of the Stull Watch. Though I yearned to have one, and was marvelously impressed with its mechanism, I still can remember quite clearly that young boy that was me holding that watch and thinking:

Why would anyone carry around a watch that doesn't work?

Time (ahem) has not changed that view, and about twenty years ago I developed the present routine. This is its first appearance in print.

EFFECT

Showing a small gold pocket watch, you open it and hand it around to the spectators. It is, in fact, exactly what it appears to be, and no more; an ordinary, working, pocket watch.

You pull out the stem slightly and hand it to a spectator; while you are turned away she sets the watch at any time she likes, then snaps the case shut.

THYNK

Taking the watch, you place it on your outstretched palm and, as you stand beside the spectator, she rests her fingertips on the closed case. After a suitably dramatic pause, you state a time; you are, in fact, only a minute or so off the time set by the spectator.

You close the watch and hand it to her for another test; this time she is to twist the stem *without* looking at the face of the watch.

She does so. You scribble something on a card and put it on the table. You ask her to open the watch and to call off the time. It is, for example, 8:20. You tell her to pick up the card and read aloud what is written there. She reads, of course, 8:20.

METHOD

The watch is, as stated, absolutely ordinary, and can be examined (though you don't suggest this) before and after the routine.

Its exact duplicate, however, *isn't*. You have had the hands of this duplicate watch 'frozen' by a jeweler at 8:20, so that no matter how the stem is twisted the hands will not move.

At the outset of the routine this watch is fingerpalmed in the right hand. You have the spectator set a time as described. Taking the watch into your right hand between thumb and forefinger you apparently drop it into your left palm. In fact you clip it, and the fingerpalmed gaffed watch goes into the left hand. (This is simply the standard Bobo switch²¹, here done with watches; a bit more difficult than with coins, but still not very demanding.)

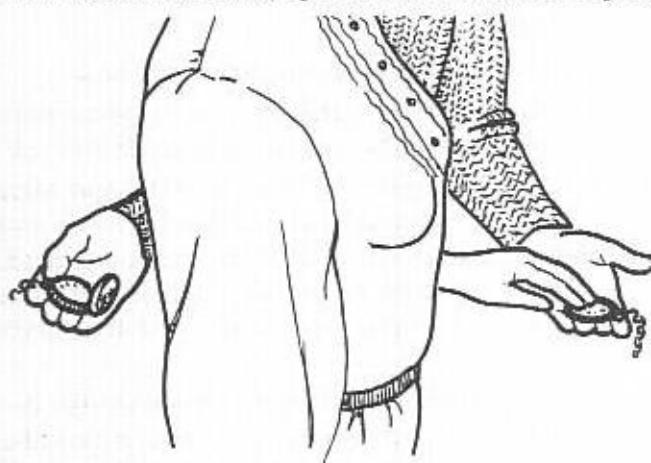
Now—and this is important—you stand facing the left side of the spectator; your left hand is in front of her and your right (holding the real watch) is behind her.

She places her fingertips on the watch your left hand holds and concentrates as best she can. Meanwhile, your right hand, completely screened from view behind her back, opens the real watch and you sight the time. This done,

you use first finger
and thumb to twirl the
hands around until
they match your pre-
set time of 8:20.

You then close the
real watch, being sure
to press down on the
release button as you
do so to avoid any tell-
tale clicking sound.

During this time—
no more than thirty



²¹Bobo's NEW MODERN COIN MAGIC, page 10.

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seconds—you have been having the spectator concentrate, visualizing a gigantic clock face, all the usual. Now you announce you have a rough impression and, stepping a bit away from the spectator, you announce a time.

In doing this you miscall the time you sighted by two or three minutes; this is done only partly for showmanship.

The other part of the reason is that, having stated your impression, you now push the release button and let the lid of the visible watch flip up. You look at it and, with a slight bit of annoyance, announce the *exact* time which you earlier glimpsed.

In addition to subtly verifying the identity of the watch, this also sets in the minds of the audience the idea that it is set at a particular time, quite different from the force time later to be revealed.

Of course you haven't let the spectator actually see the face of the watch, this seemingly more by accident than design. Now you snap it shut, hand it directly to her, and have her twiddle the stem some more.

As she does this you take out a card, scribble the force time on it and put it on the table in front of her; for the moment the pencil you use is also left on the table.

Her twiddling done, the spectator opens the watch and calls off the force time. When she has done this you indicate the card on the table and as she reaches for it you take (do not ask) the watch from her and snap it shut. In dropping it into your other hand and thence to the table you of course switch it for the real watch.

As the spectator reads off the time you absently pick up the pencil and put it away, getting rid of the gaffed watch as you do so.

Since this switch occurs *after* the spectator calls off the time, there is no 'heat' on it at all. Now that the ordinary—ticking, running—watch is on view, there is no solution to your little problem of telepathy and clairvoyance.

NOTES

Do sell this as clairvoyance, not precognition—it plays better that way.

Of course you will only do this behind-the-back handling when angles permit it, i.e., when other spectators do not have a view behind your subject's back.

As an alternative to the behind-the-back glimpse, you have the spectator hold the watch between her palms; you can walk a short distance away and turn your back as you write down your first 'telepathic' impression on a card. While you do this you have plenty of time to reset the real watch. (In this case you must be sure of your spectator, i.e., that she won't fiddle with the watch and open it.)

I suggest you use 8:20 as the force time since it is a psychological force—thus in the final phase of the routine you can ask if anyone else received a clairvoyant impression. If they don't hit, it plays just as well; if they do, it becomes very strange indeed.

THYNK

The switch should not look anything like a coin sleight or move; that said, I suggest you take a look at Chapter Two on coin switching in Bobo's NEW MODERN COIN MAGIC.

CREDITS

George Blake described a watch with 'frozen' hands in the *Phoenix*²². The watch-case glimpse goes back at least to Houdini's exposé of Argamasilla,²³ and has been in print many times; all these versions involved a single visible watch, however, unlike the procedure just described.

²²No. 144; Feb. 13, 1948; page 578.

²³See Gibson and Young's HOUDINI ON MAGIC, page 251.

CHRONOGRAM

Like the previous item, this uses a pocket watch as its central prop; however, I've yet to figure out a way of combining the two effects.

Worse, I am not really going to describe a specific method, just a presentational concept; I flatter myself that my readers are astute enough that method won't be a problem, though I will discuss that a bit.

When I first heard a fragmentary description of the Al Koran medallion effect I was intrigued; it sounded like—and indeed seemed to play like—a miracle. However, I've a perverse turn of mind in that where possible I like effects to have at least a surface logic to them—and I couldn't figure out a logical way to explain why a three-digit number was engraved on an astrological medallion...unless the number was 666...

...so I mulled it over for a while and finally came up with something which I sent to (the now late) Ken Brooke, and several years later published as *KeyKnow* in *OCTASM* (see page 342).

Here's another approach to the same problem.

EFFECT

You say that you recently came into possession of an object—you hold up a small box—which was formerly the property of a highly adept occultist. Theorizing that emanations or vibrations of the dead mystagogue may have been retained by the object, you propose a test to see if said invisible influences are being picked up by your audience.

Pointing to a spectator you ask him for any letter of the alphabet; he responds with a G.

A second spectator suggests the letter R. The third and last spectator provides the letter U.

THYNK

"G-R-U," you muse, noting the letters down. "They could be the initials of the famous painter of seascapes, Gordon Russell Underwood... or possibly... just possibly..."

You invite a spectator to come up. As she does so you point out that there are over *seventeen thousand* three-letter combinations (17,576 to be precise— $26 \times 26 \times 26$).

You open the box and ask the spectator to describe what she sees. It is a pocket watch, she says, and on a further query from you she describes the five-pointed star engraved on its upper surface.

You ask her to turn over the watch and read what's inscribed on the back. She calls off the letters G-R-U.

NOTES

To illustrate the presentation I have given a very specific handling, which is in fact that given for the medallion effect in Al Koran's PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS²⁴.

Given the premise, you will appreciate that there are many available methods for achieving the effect, both in print and on the market. This should present no problem.

I will, however, humbly point out that not only is a watch with a monogram an object to be found in the real world—and thus less suspicious—but as the figures mentioned above indicate, it is far stronger in terms of the possible choices than the usual three-digit number.

Though, as mentioned, *Chronogram* won't work with *Chronologic*, it could be combined with other effects. For example, the watch could have stopped when the occultist died, in that touching way timepieces have—and this time could match one chosen by a member of the audience. It might even, when opened, play a selected tune—and if you have a few different music-box movements you could fake this in interesting fashion... or you could find a thousand-dollar Hunter watch in an antique shop!

CREDITS

As noted in text; also Roy Johnson had a time prediction using the basic Koran methodology²⁵, and Arthur Emerson later published a whole book on this approach²⁶.

²⁴Edited by Hugh Miller; page 11.

²⁵*None But The Brave* in his THIRD DIMENSION, page 68.

²⁶TELL-TALE TIMEPIECE.

CROSS-REFERENCE

Tri-Beaut: see *Trinkle*—page 186
Zodiaccent: see *Zodaxis*—page 265
Speakay: see *PAct*—page 673
Courtship: see *Quinsation*—page 671
Chronologic: see *KeyKnow*—page 342

MYXTYR

[1985]

RECENTLY THERE'S BEEN another little flurry over the 'ethics' of mentalism. First there was one David Price's attack on the conveniently dead Dr. David Hoy in the pages of *Genii*¹—and, more recently, the far more gentlemanly and scholarly but just as curious writing of Dr. John Booth in his PSYCHIC PARADOxes and DRAMATIC MAGIC.

Dr. Booth talks of how magicians were 'dismayed' when Hoy became a fraudulent psychic, which is puzzling in at least two respects. First—I know a great number of people in the magic community and I don't recall ever hearing David Hoy and his work being discussed in any but the most favorable of terms. Second—Dr. Booth seems to assume that since Dr. Hoy had previously been a magician and a mentalist that he therefore *must* have been a fraudulent psychic; such is not necessarily the case. Dr. Hoy had a long career as a psychic, with many testimonials to his abilities and never, to my knowledge, any allegation of fraud.

Dr. Booth speculates, in the latter book, about possible methods Hoy *might* have used, but these are only hypotheses with no evidence whatever to support them. It is one thing for Dr. Booth to hold a skeptical opinion regarding David Hoy—but quite another to state it as proven fact, and ascribe to others views they did not in fact hold.

There's little point in discussing Price's attack on Dr. Hoy in *Genii*, since as far as I have been able to determine no one took this 'article' seriously.

Related to this, there has been renewed interest in the problem of disclaimers used by mentalists—a lot of heat but very little light. One of the few intelligent pieces on the subject was that of Dr. Marcello Truzzi in a Bonus insert to *Magick*².

It seems to me that performers should get one simple idea into their heads regarding this, to wit: no matter how you present it, you cannot do a mental effect without creating in some people a false belief—whether the effect is one of *my* sophisticated miracles (ahem!) or the Color Vision Box done on a magic-shop counter. The theme of mentalism is just too appealing, in a strange way, for most people to resist.

¹Vol. 47, No. 5; May 1983; page 337.

²No. 343.

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The only two ways you can keep from creating this illusion are not to perform at all—or to perform an effect and then expose its workings. (Don' laugh—Kaye, in his absurd *HANDBOOK OF MENTAL MAGIC*, recommends precisely that!³)

In fact—to rephrase what I said in *PSYCHOMETRY*—the idea of show business is, in many cases, to create an illusion of reality through dramatic means and quite often a spectator will incorporate that dramatized illusion into his or her life as a reality. Creating such a belief is not always the purpose of art but more often than not it is one of its effects—and if the art is competently executed, such an effect may well be unavoidable.

This effect extends further than one might think—on the most elementary level, you can, while watching a juggling act, be misled into thinking it is possible for a person to accomplish certain feats honestly and fairly; you do this because you are unaware that the juggler's props are gaffed. You can think a magician to be a master of sleight-of-hand, unaware of his *Svengali Deck*; you can view a politician on TV and be impressed by the breadth of his knowledge, unaware of the electronic information promptboard built into his lectern. In none of these cases may the performer be making any specific false claim, yet you are still going to draw an erroneous assumption from it.

This happens in every walk of life—that we should fret about it within the illusionary aspect of show business seems to me not only useless but downright silly.

To close let me again quote myself in content, from *OMNIMANCY*: Yes, you can exploit people and rip them off with mentalism if you want to, just as with any human interaction—or you can help them, entertain them, take them into a world of wonders if you want to...

...and all the abstract discussions are at base irrelevant; it comes down to, finally, what you personally want to accomplish with your art. It's your art—and your decision—and your life.

CHAIRVOYANCE

A major factor in the career of Dutch psychic Gerard Croiset has been a particular kind of precognitive test. In fact, an entire chapter in his biography⁴ was devoted to this test and the reputation it gained for Croiset in parapsychological circles. If you're a genuine psychic, it's an intriguing premise for a demonstration of your powers. If you are not...

...read on.

EFFECT

When the audience enters the auditorium they notice an envelope on prominent display. After you have been introduced and made your opening remarks, you draw attention to the envelope and ask for the assistance of a spectator. The spectator comes on stage and you explain that, some hours ago, you wrote something concerning a particular member of the audience; you'd like the assisting spectator to read it aloud.

You take from its display-place the envelope and, tearing it open, dump the paper it contains into the spectator's hand.

He reads: *"It is 4:30PM on [date]. I am sitting in the theatre auditorium in Row 5, Seat 6, and attempting to visualize the person who will decide to sit in this seat four hours in the future."*

At this point you stop the spectator for a moment and request the person in the seat mentioned to rise. She does so, and you have the spectator continue reading.

"The person I visualize has blonde hair—it is a lady—she has long blonde hair and is wearing a black dress. As she sits, there are two things on her mind—there seems to be some sort of financial problem which has been bothering her but is now about to be solved—and, I think perhaps connected with this—there's an

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⁴CROISET THE CLAIRVOYANT by Jack Harrison Pollack.

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activity for which she has been preparing for some time which she is now taking steps to bring into being. She is a very attractive lady and appears to be in her late twenties.'

It is clear that you have visualized the lady accurately, and she confirms your reading as correct.

METHOD

This is an example of how the dramatic line of mentalism can completely overshadow method and—in this case—cause an audience to look, figuratively and literally, in the wrong direction.

The entire focus of the prophecy seems to be the person, and that's where all the attention goes. Actually, you aren't predicting the *person* at all; you're predicting the *seat*. This being the case, it may not even be necessary for me to say that the envelope is a window envelope with a pre-written description, and all you do is fill in the *row* and *seat* numbers where the person matching that description decides to sit.

This is, of course, accomplished with a nail-writer, of whatever kind you prefer. As this is your opening effect, you don't have to worry about getting the writer on; you're wearing it when you come out.

There is a bit more to be said.

Given this premise and presentation, there are a number of different approaches and variations that can be used. It should be pointed out that if you are working in a venue where the seats are reserved or assigned, obviously this test can't be effectively performed. It must be clear that you could have no prior knowledge of who would decide to sit in any given seat; thus the seating must be open.

Let's look at the specifics of the prediction itself.

There are two possibilities here—that you are able to get a look at the people who will make up your audience beforehand (which will be the situation in the vast majority of cases)—or that you have no prior knowledge.

Taking the more likely case first—from your soon-to-be audience you decide on an attractive lady, and you write out the prophecy on the lines indicated above—leaving the spaces for row and seat number blank, of course. Please note the last line of that prediction: "... *appears to be in her late twenties.*" What you do here is knock off about five years or so; thus you'd write the above for someone you would guess to be in her early thirties. There is not an adult person alive, this writer included, who wouldn't like to be thought to appear younger than he or she is.

You also say she's attractive so she should *be* attractive; you want this to appear as prophecy, not flattery.

There's an ulterior motive for all this. You say she "... *appears to be in her late twenties,*" and are saying how she looks rather than her actual age, so you cannot be considered to be making a factual error. Therefore, when you ask

MYXTYR

her if that is correct she is going to agree—and the audience will take that as an agreement that the *entire reading* is correct, not just the age business.

The 'psychological reading' lines I indicate for the prophecy are just samples; you can use whatever you think will work best for the particular person you pick.

It should be pointed out that if you can manage to acquire some background information on a specific person, and incorporate that into your prediction, it can make it that much stronger.

Female performers may wish to use a male audience member for this effect; you should adjust the above comments accordingly.

Now let's consider the second case—when you have no opportunity to see your prospective audience beforehand.

Given that you have an audience of any size at all, you can be reasonably certain that people fitting certain general descriptions will be there. A *"distinguished silver-haired gentleman in a dark business suit"* or a *"lovely dark-haired lady in a white dress"* may sound specific but you would have to be very unlucky not to find one in the appropriate audience. Since you almost certainly will have at least a general idea of the kind of people who will compose your audience you can make some judgments about the probable age and appearance of the people involved. If you're opening for Steve and Eydie that's one kind of audience—but don't expect to see the same people when you start the show for Mariah Carey.

Let us take the dark view for a moment and consider what to do when you've offended the gods and they don't put anyone in your audience who remotely matches the description in your prediction.

Well—could happen; so we take out a little insurance by adding an extra gaff.

Here we use a somewhat more baroquely gaffed envelope; it has the window in the back with your prophecy as usual. In front of the prophecy you stick a dividing wall, made from the face and flap of another envelope, and glue the two flaps together to create a double envelope.

In the empty front compartment of this envelope you put another prediction sheet. What do you predict? Anything you can force in a reasonably convincing manner—card from a deck, word from a book, coin from a pocket and so forth.

You stick down the flap of the envelope only at the center, so if necessary you can simply pull it open.

If an appropriate person is in your audience, fine; you do the prophecy as usual, filling in the seat designation, tearing off the end of the envelope and dumping the prediction out from the rear compartment. If not, you do the force and then show the prediction from the front compartment.

Given that this 'out' puts a lock on the presentation, in that there's no way you can fail—you will appreciate that you can seal this gaffed envelope into

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another envelope, which is then sealed up to hellandgone, and mail it to your program chairperson or entertainment director. When you get to the show you ask the chairperson for the envelope, open it, take out the gaffed envelope and put it on display. This is, of course, done before the audience enters. In the course of presenting the effect you introduce the chairperson, who verifies receiving the prediction weeks ago, etc.—and can, in fact, be the one who reads the prophecy.

Regarding seat designation: most auditoriums do indicate seats by row and seat number. You should be sure that you are able to figure out from your onstage position just what row and seat your predicted person is occupying. In some cases the spectator will be seated for some time before you go on; you can spot the person from backstage and look up their location on a seating chart.

(Note: Be sure to check again just before the show starts—the targeted spectator might change seats.)

Where seating designations aren't specific—rows of folding chairs, for example—make sure your prediction is in very unambiguous terms—"I am sitting 5 rows up from the stage, in seat 6 from the north aisle..."—whatever you have to do to make the position clear and concise.

CREDITS

Croiset, as far as I know, devised the test; it may well have been the inspiration for a chair test in Aage Darling's I'LL READ YOUR MIND⁵ and a similar effect created by Dr. Jaks⁶.

⁵Page 12.

⁶See *Ibidem*, No. 24; Dec. 1961; page 30—or *Swami*, Vol. 1, No. 6; June 1972; page 22.

TRIVERSE

Many years ago I first received a copy of Harry Stanley's *Unique Magic Studio Catalog* and was, needless to say, fascinated by the descriptions of the many Al Koran routines available. There was, however, an effect not by Al Koran but by David Hemingway which really intrigued me; it was called **Triple Psychometry** and the effect was the divination of three selected cards, chosen by the spectators while they held the deck in their own hands.

I put my mind to this, and after some brainwork came up with what you are about to learn. Some years later I finally bought **Triple Psychometry** from Mr. Hemingway, and learned that his excellent effect was accomplished by completely different means!

EFFECT

You invite three spectators to take part, asking them to face each other in a roughly triangular arrangement.

Handing one of the spectators a deck of cards, you ask her to shuffle it and then let the person on her left select a card; she is then to hand the deck to the person on her right.

The spectator holding the card notes its identity and returns it to the deck. The spectator now holding the deck repeats the procedure, i.e., he has the spectator on his left choose a card, then he hands the deck to the spectator on his right; the spectator holding the card notes it and returns it. The same procedure is followed with the third spectator, who may shuffle the deck before returning it to you.

In spite of these extraordinary conditions, you are able to locate the three selected cards.

METHOD

Indicated in the title, the method of this effect can be explained in one sentence: the deck has a one-way back design and, given the procedure described above, all three cards will be reversed end for end in the deck.

Now I'm not going to kid you that this works like a charm every time; it doesn't. It does work *most* of the time, and when you do miss it's usually just one card, hardly ever two, and I've never missed on all three. However, given the nature of out-of-the-hands reversal methods, there's always going to be a slight element of chance; the only such I've never had go bad on me is my *Talismanacle*, described on page 203.

Should you miss on one card—and I don't want to scare you off this effect; it usually works fine—there are ways to 'get out' of it, such as one-ahead gambits... but I do not recommend going this route. Finding any of the selections is so miraculous under the conditions, I don't think it wise to trade two miracles for what, depending on the out you use, might be perceived as three card tricks. Much better to tell the spectator you missed with that he's a challenge—and then succeed with him on some entirely different test.

If you are using a deck with a one-way back design, find the cards by dealing them face up as you hold the deck face down in your hand. Do not spread the cards face down and push the selections out—the spectators will start thinking of marked cards, and though this really wouldn't explain anything, a wrong solution is just as bad as a right solution.

I personally recommend a deck in which the one-way is indicated on the faces—either because they've been printed with the indices closer to one end than the other (and such decks are not too hard to find), or because you've scratched the index pip at one end as described by Annemann⁷.

CREDITS

It would be a chancy task to try to determine the inventor of the one-way principle; Annemann, however, brought the technique to a very exalted level, and probably was my inspiration for the above routine.

⁷The Jinx, Summer Extra 1935; page 42.

TRIVARICATION

This is another one of those peculiar ones—peculiar in that when I thought of it, the idea seemed so blindingly obvious that I was certain that someone must have thought of it before.

It was new to Phil Goldstein, however—and if neither of us had heard of it, with our passion for ferreting out every bit of information regarding mentalism—then just maybe it is new. It's a logical combination of two old ideas.

EFFECT

You're seated at a table across from three spectators; you place a cup mouth down in front of each. Turning your back, you ask each to place a small personal object under his or her cup.

This done, you ask that any two of them exchange cups, and tell you when this has been done. When so told, you turn to face them.

You say, *"I want each of you in turn to say to me, 'I have the—and then name the object you put under your cup. Of course when you do this, the two of you who exchanged cups will be lying; let's see how good you are at prevarication.'*"

Each spectator in turn names the object he or she possesses—and you immediately name the liars and the truth-teller.

Turning your back, you have them remove the objects and put three new objects under the cups; two of them switch as before—and, as before, when you turn around and they name the objects, you discern the truth-teller and the liars.

To make the final test more difficult, the three are to use coins—making sure they are of three different values; with three objects so similar, you point out, the test is far more precise. Nevertheless, again you are able to detect the lies and the truth.

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METHOD

Yes, yes, you're way ahead of me—it's simply Tommy Dowd's version of the *Liars* plot, published in *Phoenix*⁸, wedded to the Bob Hummer *Mathematical 3-Card Monte* principle⁹.

For those few of you not familiar with the Hummer effect—you note a slight imperfection in one of the cups, and its position among the three. If, when you turn around, it hasn't moved, obviously the other two cups were transposed. If it has moved, then just as obviously it and the cup that was formerly at that position have been transposed. It is a very simple exercise in logic, and is fully discussed in Martin Gardner's *MATHEMATICS, MAGIC AND MYSTERY*¹⁰.

The presentation indicated—with the *Liars* plot and the changing of the objects, the coins, etc.—leads people away from the simple method. All the attention is focused on the objects—not the cups—and it seems that you would have to know who had which object in order to know who lied or told the truth.

CREDITS

As indicated in text.

⁸No. 90; Aug. 24, 1945; page 364.

⁹BOB HUMMER'S COLLECTED SECRETS; pages 35 and 59.

¹⁰Page 63.

PENTAB

This is not an effect, but rather an improved (in my opinion) method for a particular prediction technique.

That technique was marketed by the brilliant J.G. Thompson as *Jet Thought*. It's an excellent method¹¹, and I have used it for any number of different presentations. Over the years, however, I have gradually changed both the construction and handling, and the approach I will now describe has some marked advantages.

First—the prediction cards are all the same size; there is no danger of a spectator seeing that the card that comes out is smaller than the card that went in.

Second—there is no counting; the card is instantly extracted.

Third—there is no danger of one of the other cards being drawn out with the prediction card.

For this you will require the following:

- a letter-size envelope of heavyweight paper
- five index cards, three inches by five inches
- two sheets of onionskin paper
- a roll of cellophane tape
- an envelope with the flap cut off, containing an index card
- six additional envelopes

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You write your prophecies on the five index cards; these should be single-design or single-word predictions, written in broad-tip marker large enough to be read by the audience from stage distance.

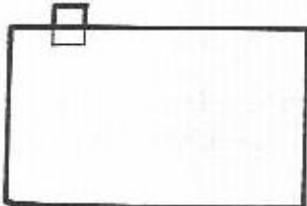
When done, you take a two-inch length of tape and stick a half-inch of its length to the upper edge of your first prediction card,

¹¹See *Indiair*, page 309 of this volume, for further information.

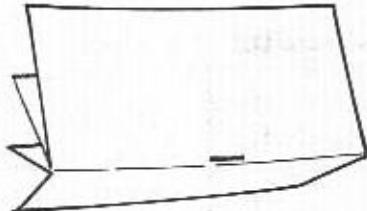
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about a half-inch from the left end; you then fold the tape down in half, sticking the other end to the other side of the card for a half-inch length, and pressing the projecting tab of tape together.

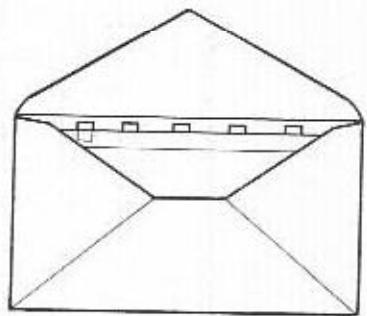
Thus you have created a very simple index-tab; you do this with the other four cards, putting the tabs successively a bit less than an inch apart. If you have used a matte-finish tape such as Scotch Magic Transparent Tape™, the part of these tabs on the cards is almost invisible.



You now cut two five-inch squares from the onionskin and, placing them together, join them with a staple in the exact center and then fold them over once, so that the staple is now in the middle of the folded edge. Put them into the envelope with the fold at the bottom. This creates five compartments—and into each one you place one of your five predictions. The tabs are, of course, on the upper edge and visible to you.



This is put on top of the stack of six envelopes, and the flapless envelope containing the blank index card goes on top of all.



In working, you partially remove the card from the flapless envelope (it appears, of course, that the flap on the second [loaded] envelope is that of the top one, so all seems fair)—and as you do this the spectators see that the envelope contains nothing else. The index card also, of course, conceals the row of tabs in the second envelope. You push the card back down into the flapless envelope and then, grasping the flap of the loaded envelope, pull it free of the stack. The flap is folded down and the envelope is placed aside while you go through the selection procedure.

Ideally this should be one where you apparently don't know what has been selected, so that you will be able to remove your prophecy before the choice is announced to the audience.

Since you know which tab goes with which prediction, you can now without looking reach into the envelope and take out the correct prediction. The tabs make this an instantaneous move, and the onionskin separators keep the other cards in place. As the tab is flexible, you can fold it back behind the card as you display it to the spectators—or just keep it between finger and thumb.

The envelope is casually set aside—don't toss it, it might land with a thunk—and forgotten about, and all attention is on the spectator as he or she reveals the chosen whatever and you are proved to be the miracle worker they always thought you were....

LONGWAVE

This is based on Corinda's *One Red Card Prediction*¹², which was in turn based on a Dai Vernon effect¹³.

EFFECT

You deal out ten playing cards, alternately face up and face down, into two rows of five. You explain that you will attempt an experiment in subconscious perception, and ask the spectator across the table from you to relax while you write something on a small slip of paper. You do so and set the paper aside.

You now ask the spectator to name a number between one and ten; the card at this number is counted to and set aside. It is, for example, a face-up card. The other face-up cards are turned face down and it is seen that all nine cards have blue backs—but when the spectator turns over the chosen card it is seen to have a red back. A spectator opens the prediction which is, of course, correct.

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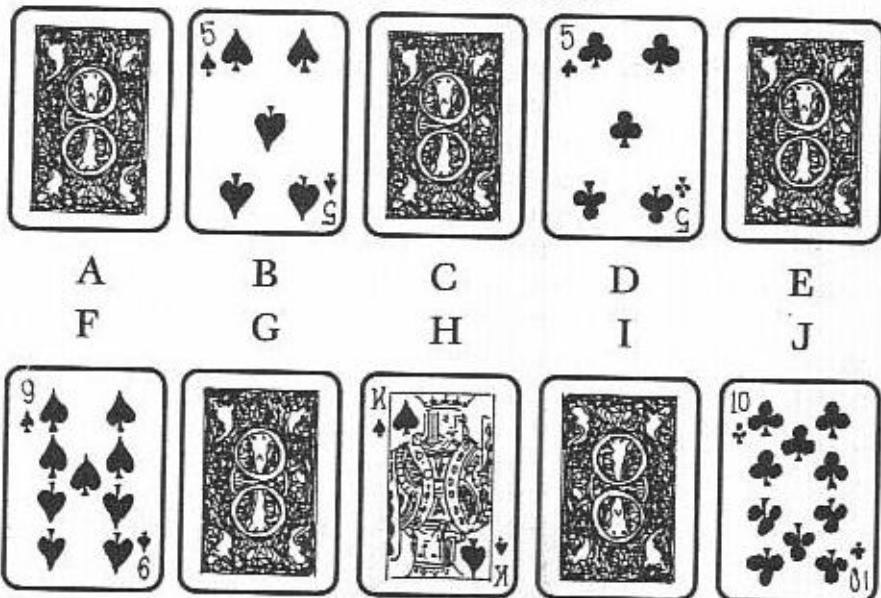
METHOD

Here we use a two-way out in combination with a highly ambiguous but fair-appearing system of counting. Let's consider the cards to be laid out so:

¹²THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM, page 326.

¹³Mental Die, aka The Crystal Cube.

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All cards have blue backs and Club or Spade faces with the exception of B (the Five of Spades) which has a red back, and C which has a red (Heart or Diamond) face.

If B is arrived at, all other cards are turned face *down*; if C, all other cards are turned face *up*.

Here's the counting sequence:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Sequence</u>
2	A, B
3	A, B, C
4	E, D, C, B
5	A, F, G, B, C
6	F, A, G, B, H, C
7	F, G, H, I, J, A, B
8	J, I, H, G, F, E, D, C
9	J, I, H, G, F, E, D, C, B

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This chart may look a bit complex but if you try the sequences with the cards laid out you will see that they are very logical in appearance and not at all difficult to recall.

You are, of course, careful in laying out the cards not to expose the red surfaces. Should the spectator name one or ten you merely smile benignly and say, '*Between one and ten, please—I don't want you to think I am trying to influence you psychologically.*' This doesn't make any sense at all, but it will usually serve the purpose.

MYXTYR

Here's some of the verbiage I've used:

"...just make yourself comfortable... relax... let your mind become passive... a single digit, one solitary number is drifting into your field of consciousness... what number is that? Three? [you count]... This card... our test here has to do with the visual spectrum. As you know, the color with the longest wavelength we can consciously perceive is... that's right, red; and when we cease to perceive it as color we sense it as heat, another part of the electromagnetic spectrum. It is odd, but that particular color—red—can also be perceived on a subconscious level, as witness... [the other cards are turned over, then the chosen one]... you're an excellent subject. By the way, would you read what I wrote on the paper?" The spectator reads: "You will select the red card."

"...I just knew you could do it!"

NOTE

Another approach to this same general effect is my *Crimson Count* to be found on page 470.

CREDITS

As indicated in text.

BLOCKHEAD

What follows is the very first thing I ever put into print; the year was 1959, so clearly I couldn't have been more than two or three at the time... anyway, Ed Mellon published it in his *Mental-Wise*¹⁴ and started using it in his own performances.

It is not presented here as a period piece; I am not, as John Northern Hilliard once said in a similar context, antiquarian enough for that. No—I thought it was good then and I still like it—and I have every intention of publishing it again in 2011.

I'll set it down here exactly as it appeared in *Mental-Wise*, and then suggest some changes in approach.

EFFECT

"A rather interesting thing happened to me the other day," says the performer. "A friend of mine who is interested in ESP thought up a new test—he would set his watch at a random number behind his back, and I would attempt to discern that time. However, upon attempting the test, I found I received no impressions at all. I later noticed that the watch had a radium dial, and after a series of tests I have found that many of the radioactive minerals can 'blanket out' mental vibrations. Neural patterns, sometimes mistakenly called 'brainwaves' are electrical in nature and can be recorded on the electroencephalograph, however I am digressing. Sir [inviting a spectator forward], you will notice here two lead plates. These have been used as shielding in a reactor and have thus become radioactive, although not, of course, dangerously so. While my back is turned, I request that you remove one of the ESP cards from this stand and place it between the two plates. Then remove the other four and place them in this envelope and seal it. Tell me when you have done that."

¹⁴ Vol. 4, No. 9; July-Aug. 1959; page 2.

MYXTYR

When the spectator indicates he is finished, the performer turns around, places his fingertips on the envelope, and announces the four cards within. He mentions that the one card whose impression he does *not* receive must be the one between the two plates.

(He is, of course, correct.)

METHOD

In that presentation, given as it appeared in *Mental-Wise*, the Mellon Quantimental display stand was used (it only cost \$12.50 back then!)—but there are any number of ways to learn the identity of the card. A simple example would be to have the spectator mix five ESP cards and deal them in a row on the table; they're marked, so you note the order and turn your back. After the chosen card has been put between the plates you turn back slightly to gesture as you instruct the spectator to seal the other cards in the envelope—and in so doing note what card is missing from the row. Another method is *Handbook*, on page 496, or *Vespers*, page 34. Methodology should not present any problem.

In the wake of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, however, I think perhaps we should tone down the 'radioactivity' aspect—and simply say that the lead plates were used as shielding in a hospital radiology lab. Similarly—few people now have watches with radium dials (when they have dials at all), so the intro might simply make reference to some parapsychological experiments you've been doing.

That said, the basic idea is, I think, still perfectly serviceable; it's a premise that, within the structured fantasy that is mentalism, has a logical sound to it.

STANDOUT

This is a spectator-as-mentalist presentation with, I think, some interesting aspects.

EFFECT

You have one spectator select a card from a deck, note its identity, and return it to the deck. She then writes its identity on a showcard with broad-tip marker, or slate with chalk, keeping the writing hidden both from you and the audience.

Another spectator is invited forward and the cards are fanned before him. Cautioning him not to decide on the card at the face of the deck, it being 'too obvious', you instruct him to look over all the other cards and take out the one that seems special to him.

He does so, and when the other spectator turns around the showcard or slate, it is seen that they have both decided on the same card.

Unlike other effects in this genre, this does not require the second spectator to be an 'impromptu confederate'; he may very well think he makes the decision by psychic impressions alone.

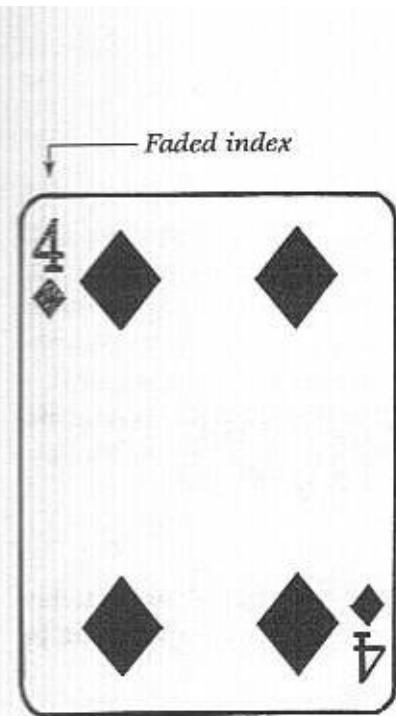
METHOD

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To accomplish this you use a deck of cards which has been gaffed in a simple but special way.

Take a good quality eraser and go over the index at one end of each card. In doing this all you want to accomplish is a slight fading—there should be no noticeable erasure. An unprepared card is left at the face of the pack if you wish, although this is not really necessary.

In performance you handle the selection as with any one-way deck, so that the spectator's card is returned reversed end for end.



MYXTYR

When you fan the cards in front of the second spectator, you do so in a manner to display the faded indexes; among them, the nonfaded index of the selection will stand out in a subtle but unmistakable way—and thus the spectator will, following your instructions, choose it as his selection, often without knowing quite why.

It only remains to have him take it from the deck, ask the other spectator to show his writing, and thus bring the effect to its conclusion.

NOTES

There are a number of methods in print for having a spectator reverse his selection, and you may wish to use one of these in conjunction with this effect.

It has probably already occurred to you that *Standout* could be combined with *Triverse* (page 643)—so that a *spectator* finds the three selections. This may be attractive in that if you are worried about the practicability of *Triverse* you can do it this way until you're convinced it really does work; if it fails, the spectator carries the can, not you...of course the downside of that is the possibility of the audience perceiving the spectator as doing something more impressive than anything you've done!

Another—admittedly chancy—way of using this deck is to reverse three 'popular' cards, e.g., Queen of Hearts, Jack of Spades, Ace of Diamonds, and—with these at evenly spaced points in the fan, faded indices visible, briefly show the fan to three spectators and ask them to think of a card they see.

You handle the dénouement *à la Tossed-Out Deck*, since it is more than possible that two or all of them will have thought of the same card: you show the cards with the '*If I found your card, be seated*' line...and await developments...what the hell, you want to live forever?

CREDITS

As previously indicated, the origins of the one-way deck principle are (to coin a phrase) long shrouded in mystery. The concept of 'fading' cards was one of the approaches used by Douglas Dexter in his card stab routine,¹⁵ his use and application were quite different from the present routine.

¹⁵ *Pentagram*, Vol. 3, No. 9; June 1949; page 66.

BOXCARDS

What follows is a prediction technique with some new touches added to some standard principles. As you will see, it can be employed in a variety of ways.

EFFECT

You show a deck of jumbo ESP cards in their box which in turn is nested in its upturned lid. You dump the cards from the box into a spectator's hands for shuffling. While he is doing this you extract from your pocket a small sealed manila pay envelope.

The spectator having mixed the cards, you have him replace them in the box, face down. On top of the deck you drop the sealed envelope and then place the lid on the box. You invite the spectator who shuffled the cards to indicate any other person, and you have this spectator join you on stage.

You hand the boxed deck to the spectator and explain to her that the sealed envelope contains an impression you sensed of a future event. You ask her to relax and then to name a number between one and ten. She names, for example, *Six*.

At this point you may, if you wish, give her the option of changing her mind. The number finally decided on, you instruct her to open the box and remove the prediction, placing it aside for the moment. She then deals the cards one at a time onto your palm until she has reached the sixth card, at which point she stops—holding that card in her hand.

You show that the previous card was, for example, a *star*; taking the next one from the box, you show it would be a *circle* design. She is asked to show the card she holds, which is the *wavy lines*.

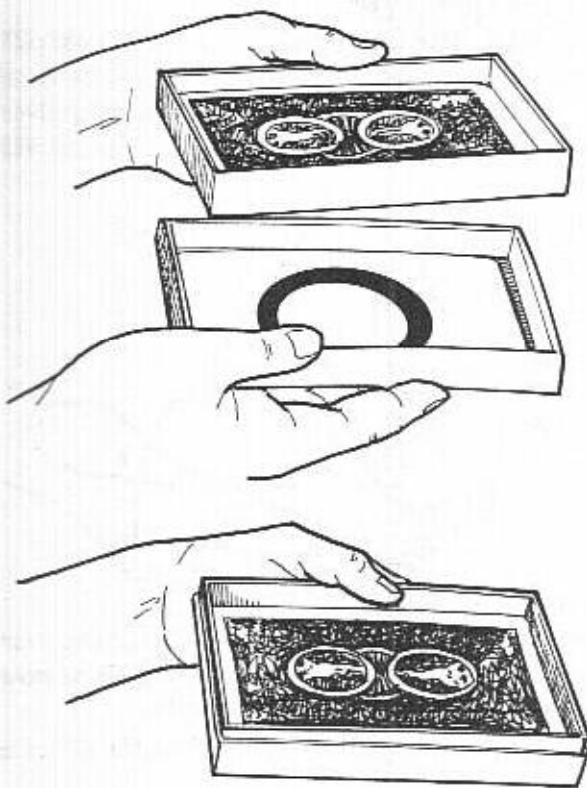
Now she opens the sealed envelope and reads its prediction aloud. It says, of course, "*You will think of the wavy lines.*"

MYXTYR

METHOD

The preparation is fairly simple. From a deck of jumbo ESP cards you remove the five *wavy lines* and interleave them with six indifferent cards so that the force design appears at the even-number positions and there is an indifferent card at top and bottom of the packet.

The prediction is prepared and sealed in a small pay envelope; the only stipulation here is that the envelope should lie very flat, i.e., not have a noticeable bulge.



You drop this envelope into the lid of the box, flap side down; on top of this you place the eleven-card force packet, face up; you nest the bottom of the box into the lid, on top of the packet, mouth up of course; and the remainder of the deck is placed in the box face down.

The only other requirement is a duplicate sealed envelope containing a blank piece of paper folded to match your prediction. This is in your pocket or some other accessible spot.

Presentation is fairly straightforward; you dump the cards into an assisting spectator's hands, squeezing the sides of the nested box to keep the bottom in the lid.

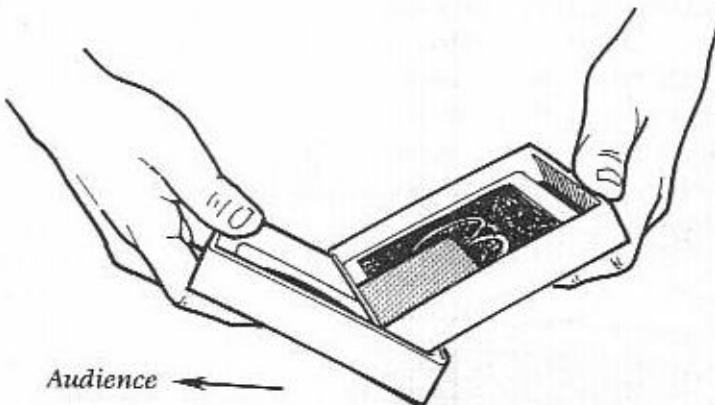
The spectator shuffles the 'deck'—actually only fourteen cards. You may wonder about this, but consider: the spectator doesn't know how many cards there are supposed to be in an ESP deck—even if he did, the cards are jumbos and thus impossible for a lay person to judge for quantity—and the complete deck will never be on display.

You take out the (empty) sealed envelope; the spectator having replaced the cards face down in the box, you drop the envelope on top of them, flap side up. Now comes the only move, hardly worthy of the term, in the whole routine.

With your upstage hand (your side is to the audience), you separate the box from the lid; your downstage (audience-side) hand brings the lid around the

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front edge of the box and over it, putting it in place on top of the box. Thus the load in the lid is now above the shuffled cards.

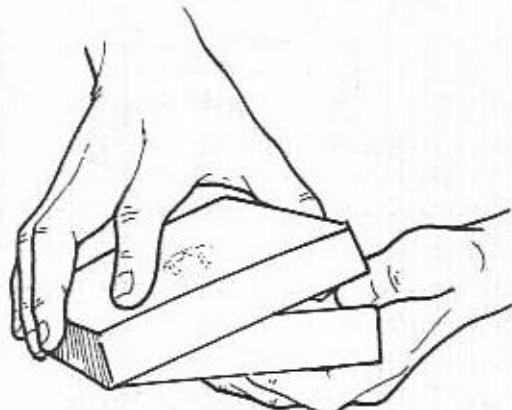


You really have little to do from here on in; the other spectator is invited up, given the box and names the number. When she removes the lid, there is the prediction (apparently) that you dropped in before putting on the lid—and it is silent proof that nothing could have happened of chicanerous nature.

She decided on a number, now she counts to it; if an even number, she takes the card at that position—if an odd number, she deals you that number of cards and looks at the next one. As the force cards alternate with indifferent ones, you can show how another number more or less would have given different results.

She shows her card, opens and reads your prediction, and thus the effect is concluded.

658 | If you wish, you can have her deal the cards onto a table rather than your hand; you would do this if you wanted to stress the point that you never at any time touch the cards—useful for a 'test conditions' situation.



NOTES

Though described with jumbo ESP cards, you could do this just as easily with playing card jumbos. Of course you would have to find the required kind of box, rather than the case they come in; also you would need five duplicate cards to do the routine as described. If you find a larger box, you could use a full deck of ESP jumbos in addition to the load packet; I really don't think this is necessary.

MYXTYR

You could eliminate the use of duplicate cards, if you so desired, by using the *Pentab* five-out prediction previously described (page 647)—each of the predictions, needless to say, covering one of the cards at second, fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth positions.

If you use *Pentab* I think you should take out a dummy index card prediction and seal it in an obviously otherwise empty envelope in the opening stage of the routine. Its innocence thus established, the *Pentab* envelope won't come under suspicion later on. In this version I think it is better for you to show the *Pentab* prediction first, then have the spectator show her card.

CREDITS

The idea of a load in the lid of a box is an old one. The alternate stacking of force cards, in print many places, all stem from the Svengali principle of Burling Hull. Phil Goldstein was the first to apply the Svengali concept to an ESP deck. The envelope subtlety for the load is my own.

QWHITE

In this very economical routine, with the aid of but a few very simple props you are able not only to answer a hidden question but to produce an appropriate answer by spirit aid.

EFFECT

From a small white envelope you extract four white cards, and show them to be completely blank. On one of them your subject writes a word or phrase that symbolizes for her the question in her mind. This card is sealed in the envelope and set aside for the moment.

Two of the remaining cards are placed together and laid on the subject's palm. She places her other hand on top of the two cards.

Taking the remaining card, you begin to scribble your impressions of the question she has in mind, and eventually you formulate an answer as you talk to her. This done, you rip open the envelope and read the question; indeed your answer is correct and relevant.

"*We shall see if the spirits agree,*" you say, and ask your subject to look at the cards in her hand. One of the cards does bear a message in spidery script which confirms your own answer to the question.

METHOD

Required are four white cards (these can be double-blank playing cards but 'social' cards, from a stationery store, are preferable); also a lightweight, white envelope into which they will just fit.

On two of these cards, in a faint scrawl, you write spirit messages, one generally optimistic and one with a tone of warning; each card bears an identifying pencil dot so that you can tell them apart and also differentiate them from the blanks.

MYXTYR

One of the message cards is at the top of the four-card packet, message side down; the other is third from the top, message side up.

In performance you show the envelope freely—since the cards inside are white its translucent quality will not be noticed—and then take out the four cards.

As you explain the purpose of the test (not mentioning the spirit-writing at this point) you idly show each side of each card, dealing them one by one to the table.

This is done as follows:

You show the top surface of the top card, then executing a triple turnover (this is most easily done by buckling the bottom card away from the upper three). The new top card (a message on its underside) is dealt to the table. You now do a two-card turnover, show the new surface, and deal this card (likewise bearing a message on its lower surface) to the table. You deal the last two cards to the table fairly, using actions similar in appearance to those just executed.

You hand one of the double-blanks (without a message) to the subject; she writes a word or phrase which symbolizes her question (a George Anderson angle) and turns the card face down. You slide it into the envelope; wetting your fingers from the condensation on a glass, you moisten the flap and seal the envelope.

As you place it to one side, you simply read the writing through the thin face of the envelope.

Now that you know the general idea of the question you can figure which of your two messages will be most appropriate. You place this message card on top of the remaining double-blank and have the spectator extend her hand. You have picked up the pair of cards with your palm up—but now, as you place the two cards on her palm, your hand naturally turns downward, so that as the cards rest in her palm the message is on the upper surface of the lowermost card.

Picking up the remaining card—without exposing its message—you begin to scribble on it as you get your various 'impressions'; in doing so you get some false leads, so you scribble over and cover your notes as you concentrate, destroying and/or obliterating the alternate spirit message.

Having given your answer to the question—and you do this in such a way that it will be a logical lead-in to the spirit answer—you pick up the envelope and rip it open.

(Note: you do not carefully tear off one end and extract the question card—no, you rip the envelope apart to get the card. You do this so the spectator will not be inclined to try to 'test' the envelope.)

You read the question, and it is clear that you have correctly answered it. It remains only to reveal the words of the spirits.

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NOTES

You should make sure the writing implement has a good dark lead, so that you will be able to read the writing in a brief glance.

If your envelope is fractionally wider than the card, you will find that sometimes, after the question card has been sealed inside, you can squeeze the edges of the envelope and buckle its surfaces outward. In this state the writing will not be visible through the envelope surface, but a relaxation of tension will bring it into view.

In the interests of 'psychic logic' you may want to briefly rest the pencil on the cards in the spectator's hand—so that the spirits are able to somehow draw the lead out of the pencil to write the message...!

CREDITS

The card handling for showing the surfaces is a variant of that created by Dr. Jacob Daley for his *Ultra Slate Message* which appeared in *The Jinx*¹⁶. The message reading is based on Corinda's Khan Envelope Test. An excellent variation of this, incorporating a concept from George Kaplan's *Improved Sealed-Message Reading*¹⁷, is Bob Cassidy's *White Dwarf*, which appeared in *Magick*¹⁸ and in Cassidy's own *ART OF MENTALISM*¹⁹.

¹⁶1935-1936 Winter Extra; page 88.

¹⁷FINE ART OF MAGIC, page 211.

¹⁸No. 305; Apr. 9, 1982; page 1521.

¹⁹First edition, page 41.

MUTATTLE

This is a somewhat more elaborate approach to the same general presentation as that of the previous effect.

In an early chapter of his *A SEARCH IN SECRET INDIA*²⁰ Paul Brunton tells of an encounter with an Egyptian wonderworker who impresses him greatly with a test combining question-answering with spirit-writing. His account of this test inspired the following.

EFFECT

You show a three-by-five-inch clasp-type manila pay envelope; opening it, you extract a smaller white envelope; from this you take a white card.

You put the envelopes away for the moment as you explain that the subject is to write a question on the card, and then to hold the question card between his palms for a few moments while he concentrates on the question.

This having taken place, you seal the question card into the white envelope; this in turn is sealed in the larger envelope.

The envelopes are left on the table in plain view and at this point you may, if you wish, give a verbal answer to the question.

In any event, you presently open the large envelope and dump out the smaller one. The subject opens this one and extracts his card...

...to find that his question is gone from the card—in its place, in the well-known spidery script of the spirits, is a message which is a direct answer to the question!

METHOD

The envelopes and card used at the beginning are in fact quite ordinary—the subject may himself open the envelopes and

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²⁰Page 25.

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extract the card, thus noting their innocence. It need only be said that the smaller envelope, like that used in the previous test, is thin enough for you to read the question through its unseamed surface.

In the inside jacket pocket from which you took the set of envelopes, and to which you momentarily return the large envelope, are six more manila envelopes.

Each of these is a double envelope, and in the secret compartment of each is a small white envelope containing a white card bearing one of six possible spirit messages which cover *Love, Sex, Money, Health, Work and Travel*. These are, of course, identical in appearance to the card and envelope originally shown—but the white envelopes are of a heavier weight, and writing cannot be read through them.

In performance you seal the card in the small white envelope as in the previous routine. As you talk you note the question, and from your pocket you remove the double envelope bearing the relevant message—apparently, of course, the envelope replaced there only a few moments before. (Note: there is only one table—that at which the subject writes—thus you have a logical reason as you stand some distance away to put the envelope back in your pocket momentarily.)

The question envelope is placed in the empty compartment of the double envelope which is then sealed.

It only remains to open the envelope as required to dump out the white message envelope. If you are neat and/or paranoid, you might wish to have a duplicate Kraft envelope, ordinary but sealed and then torn open to match what you will later do to the double envelope. As all attention is on the reading of the message you can decide to put the torn envelope in your pocket, apparently think better of it and discard it where someone can find it if they wish.

NOTES

I assume that if you are reading this book you are fully conversant with the construction of double envelopes. If not, you will find them everywhere in the literature from Annemann to Zens.

664 | If you can't find thick and thin white envelopes that match in appearance, for the question-reading you might simply cut a window in a heavyweight envelope and alter the handling accordingly.

CREDITS

As previously indicated.

BACKDATE

This effect has one weakness—it must be used as an opening item—but I think you may decide that its strength more than makes up for that.

EFFECT

You enter holding a pad and pen. After your opening remarks you ask three spectators, within whatever presentational *mise en scène* you care to use, to each name a single digit, thus naming a three-digit number. You note these down.

You ask the last of the three spectators to join you on stage; when she does so you ask her, rhetorically, if there is any way you could have known what she or the others would respond in answer to your request. She says no, and you agree—but perhaps you could have projected the thoughts to them...

... at this point you turn so that your back is to the audience.

Pinned to the center of your jacket at the back is an index card; it is in fact secured with a safety pin. You ask the spectator to open the pin and unfasten the card. When she complies, you ask her to read what's written on the card.

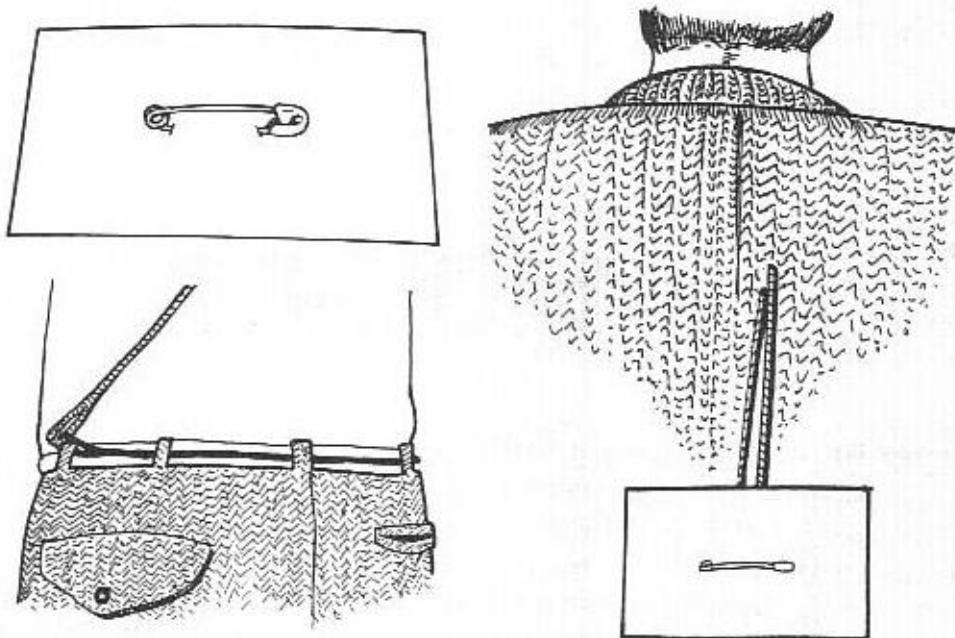
It says: *"I will attempt to influence three members of my audience to create a particular three-digit number; the number I have in mind is ____."* Of course the number mentioned is absolutely correct.

METHOD

The prediction is written on a three-by-five-inch index card along the lines indicated above; the space for the number is left blank.

A two-inch safety pin is pushed through the center of the card from the blank side, then back out again and fastened, so that about an inch of the pin-bar is visible on the writing side of the card.

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You will need a dark-colored jacket and a six-foot length of *strong* thread that matches it in color. With a needle, run the thread out the middle of the back of the jacket between the shoulders, around the bar of the pin on the message side of the card, and back through the jacket again just a quarter of an inch lower. (The thread in the illustrations is shown thick for clarity.)

Inside the jacket, the two ends of the thread are tied together to form a yard-long loop, and the end of this loop is secured to a length of elastic which runs from one side belt loop to the other. Of course you have to put the jacket on for this final bit.

If all this has been correctly done, the prediction card will tend to be held against the back of your jacket at the middle by the elastic tension on the thread. It can, however, be drawn around your body, under the armpit, and held against a five-by-seven-inch pad which you are holding as you enter

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The working is fairly simple and direct. You should enter so that the pad-holding-hand is downstage; thus the thread is concealed by the arm itself and there is virtually no chance of the audience seeing it.

MYXTYR

The three digits are named. You write them on the pad and on the prediction card, in the appropriate position.

You invite the last of the three spectators to come up; as she heads toward the stage you put the pad under your arm so you can lead the audience in applauding her for helping.

Once the pad is under the arm you simply release the pressure that's been holding the card against the pad, and the elastic draws it into position at the middle of the back of your jacket.

You are holding the pad again by the time she reaches you at the microphone, and you go through the presentation as indicated, reading the numbers off the pad. It is important you do this to justify the use of the pad.

Now you turn your back and show the card apparently pinned there securely. As you request that the lady unpin the card, your hand goes under your jacket and grasps the loop of thread to maintain a firm tension on it. If this is done it is impossible for the lady to discover that the card is not actually pinned to the jacket.

She unpins and removes the card, reads your writing, and thus the first miracle of the evening concludes.

NOTES

You see now why this must be an opener—not just because of the physical setup, but because the idea is that the card was there in position on your back when you made your entrance (not, please, that it appeared there!). You will, in making your entrance, be sure that no one can note the then pristine condition of the back of the jacket. Ideally you should come through the curtains at the center.

The setup here could be materially improved by using a permanently installed reel attached inside the jacket in place of the elastic; it is obvious how this would be arranged.

A patter theme I've considered would have to do with having arrived late, you didn't have time to remove the dry-cleaning tag...!

Another presentational notion (from which derives the title) has to do with having members of the audience decide on a particular date, a specific year in history. You rattle off some real or imagined facts concerning that date, and then show that it was predetermined—a date with destiny, so to speak.

I have described how the card is set the first time; for further performances you simply stick the pin through the card, let the thread loop from the back of the jacket go between bar and card, push the pin back through the card and close it.

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CREDITS

The original concept of a 'pinned' item seems to belong to a magician named Longueve; an improved version of his effect was published by Rezvani in his *THE MAGIC OF REZVANI* by Maurice Sardina²¹.

A greatly improved handling was developed by Peter Pit and Persi Diaconis and a version was subsequently marketed by Richard Himber as *Triple Winner*²².

To the best of my knowledge I am the first person odd enough to think of applying this principle to mentalism.

²¹Page 40.

²²See RICHARD HIMBER: THE MAN AND HIS MAGIC, page 59.

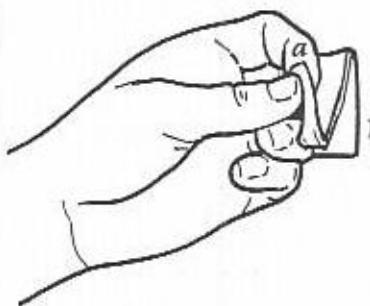
FOLDEROLL

This is not an effect, or a method, or a presentation; it is simply a subtlety to make a standard bit of mental chicanery a bit more convincing.

The idea is that you're holding an index card which you have folded into thirds; a spectator names a number and when you unfold the card and give it to someone to read, it is correct—the angle here being that it seems that the writing was folded inside the card and thus less accessible.

To see how this works, follow with a card in hand; it has been prepared with the usual prediction message with a blank space for the number. This blank space is at the bottom of the card.

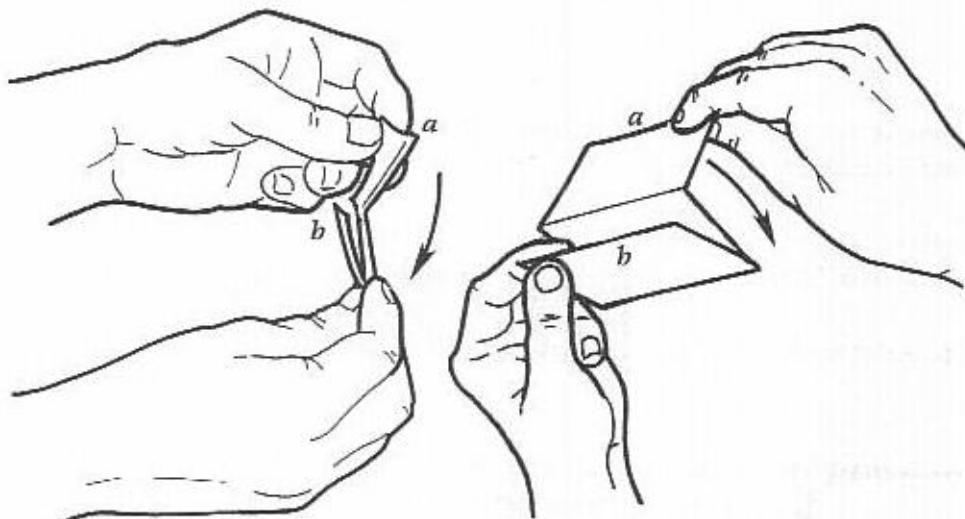
The card is creased into three fold-sections; the upper section a bit larger than a fair third, the middle section a third, and the bottom (prediction) section a bit smaller. The card is creased each way so that it will fold easily, and is finally folded into a Z-fold with the prediction fill-in section to the rear.



The number, initials or whatever are called out and you fill them in at the appropriate point with your trusty nail-, band-, thumb- or Boon writer. As you talk a bit, you now casually turn the card around so that the same section is still facing you but the writing is now upside-down from your point of view.

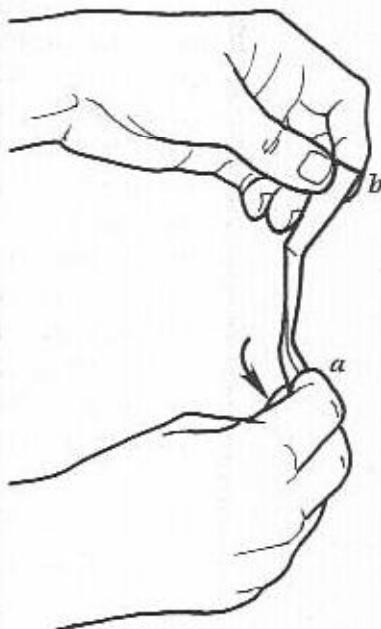
The illustrations on the next page show the sequence of unfolding, which is quite simple. You unfold the two front sections forward and down—your fingers slip down to grasp the new rear section, and the two sections in front of it are again

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unfolded outward and down. In doing this last move the fingers holding the bottom section of the prediction in the end position keep a grip on it to bend it slightly up and forward, lightly reversing the direction of the crease—so that if anyone thinks about it the card will look as it would if it had been genuinely folded as the audience assumes.

It really is quite simple, and I will be the first to admit that it is but a small subtlety—but it is visually very deceptive. Try it in front of a mirror and you'll see what I mean; even when you know what's happening it's almost impossible to believe that the prediction was not always folded away on the inner surface of the card.



QUINSATION

Like *Speakay* on page 607, this is designed to be used in conjunction with any of the many index-card psychometry routines. This, however, is not an interlude but a very visual climax for such a routine.

EFFECT

You have concluded the card-psychometry routine but you've kept all five spectators on stage. With the five cards in your hands you propose an interesting reversal—you'll see if you can activate their psychic abilities so they can read your mind!

As you are explaining this you have folded each of the cards into quarters (the spectators' writing inside), and now you mix them and then write something on the outside of each—not showing what you've written to the participating spectators.

Approaching one of them, you ask him to name a number from one to five; he does so and you search through the cards for the one that bears that number. Locating it, you have him hold it for the moment in his clenched fist.

You repeat this procedure with three more of your assisting spectators—each in turn naming one of the remaining numbers and being given that folded card to hold. The last spectator gets the final card, of course.

You say that what you've tried to do is influence the five persons to find their own cards. Instructing them to unfold the cards and look at them, you say, "*Those of you who received your own card, please signify by stepping forward and holding it above your head.*"

At this, all five spectators step forward and hold up their cards—as visual a finish and as obvious an applause cue as can be!

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METHOD

Those of you who recall *Courtship* (page 614) will already be aware of the technique used, for the same principle is at work here.

It is quite simple: the cards are marked so that you can tell which is which when you've folded them into quarters. You only pretend to number them, simulating this action.

Then, as each spectator in turn names a number, you locate his folded card within the group and bring it to the top; as you talk about his choice of number you simply write it in with your ever-faithful nail-writer. That is really all there is to it—but the visual appeal and strength of the effect is out of all proportion to the simple means employed.

In marking the cards, a preparation which serves double duty for both the present effect and the preceding psychometry routine, you must as previously mentioned confine your mark to a quarter of the back surface of each card. The simplest method is that of visualizing a square pattern, a pencil dot at the spot nearest the corner of the card indicating One, and the sequence continuing clockwise; the fifth card is left unmarked. For details on expanding this marking system—and an excellent psychometric presentation—see Rutledge and Thompson's excellent *Singin' In The Brain* routine in their *BETWEEN TWO MINDS*²³.

CREDIT

As with *Courtship*, the technique here stems from that used in a Bank Night routine created by Basil Horwitz.

²³Page 55.

PFact

This item is not an effect, nor is it a method—but a number of you will find it to be the most valuable thing in this section.

Mentalists, implying as they do a unique ability based on some special quality of their mind or brain, are often expected to perform in more or less impromptu situations. Unlike the musician or singer who requires instruments, arrangements, etc., the worker of mindreading miracles presumably really requires only his or her own brain, and thus should be able to demonstrate special powers on command.

For a brief close-up situation this presumption presents no problems; there are hundreds of items available to you for such circumstances.

A stage routine, however, is something else again. It has to have some structure, building logically from beginning to end. It has to demonstrate your abilities in a variety of ways. Most importantly, to register the strongest effect it has to look genuinely impromptu, the sort of demonstration you do 'off the top of your head'.

My thinking here is that, seeing what you do in such a situation—given that it is impressive—a prospective booker can only imagine how much *more* impressive your formal show will be.

It is, thus, clearly no good to bring out your Handydandy Pocketsize Mental Epic Slate; even a deck of cards, given the associations it holds, is less than ideal in this context.

What follows, therefore, is the outline for a mental routine which appears completely impromptu but is strong and logical, requiring the simplest and most innocent-seeming of props. For those situations where the ability to get up and do a show on a few seconds' notice could prove valuable, I think you will find it quite useful.

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1. You begin with a nail-writer prediction using the previously described *Folderoll* technique. An excellent presentation for such an effect is Phil Goldstein's *Con-Test*²⁴, in which he improves a concept of mine all to hellandgone.
2. Your second item is *Trinkle*, which you will find on page 186. This is a very clean reading of three folded billets; alternatively, another routine (such as Annemann's *Telepathy Plus*²⁵) may be used here.
- (3.) At this point you may optionally include my addition effect *Janussum*, found on page 489.
4. Now you begin the index-card psychometry routine, and in this connection I suggest you reread Phil Goldstein's *Desire* in his *BLUE BOOK OF MENTALISM*²⁶ for useful presentational points.
5. At some juncture during the above you do my psychokinetic-telepathy (!) effect *Spekay*, page 607.
6. You conclude the routine with *Quinsation* as described just previously.

I think it's not too much to say that this is a perfectly serviceable act for impromptu circumstances—frankly, it is better than a lot of formal set acts I've seen!—and to do it, what do you require?

A dozen index cards—a pencil—and a nail-writer... and that's it.

Some technical details:

The nail-writer should in fact be a Boon or a band-writer that you can get on and off without fussing. (I should note here that while the writer is used in both first and last effects, and also in *Janussum* if you include that effect, the three items are entirely different in effect and appearance.)

To carry this act around—get a clear plastic four-by-six-inch envelope at a stationery store. The index cards, set in order for the sequence of effects, are put in the envelope, and the Boon writer (if that's what you use) is stuck just above them on the inner wall of the envelope. The pencil is a mechanical one (so that its lead always matches the writer), and its pocket clip goes over the top of the plastic envelope holding it closed. Thus the cards stay clean, unbent and in order, and all the props are kept together. Drop it into your pocket when you go out and you are ready at any time to exhibit your powers in a strong and convincing way.



Please note that *PAct* is for emergency use only—it should not be used as a replacement for your regular show. I only bring up this point because I don't

²⁴*Magick*, No. 293; Sept. 25, 1981; page 1461.

²⁵ANNEMANN'S COMPLETE ONE MAN MENTAL AND PSYCHIC ROUTINE, page 18.

²⁶Page 4.

MYXTYR

want to be thought of as promulgating a set act to be used by many different performers—as you probably know by now, I don't think that any two performers should do the same effects, let alone the same act!

Used as intended, I think you will find this routine to be valuable and worthwhile.

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CROSS-REFERENCE

Triverse: see *Talismanacle*—page 203
Pentab: see *Indiair*—page 309
Standout: see *BlueCue*—page 699
Qwhite: see *Hallowgram*—page 263
Quinsation: see *Courtship*—page 614

MYSTYX

[1985]

THOSE OF YOU with a passion for minutiae may recall something of a tempest-in-a-talking-teakettle which brewed up in 1979. Phil Goldstein and I had contributed a piece to the periodical *Magick*¹ in which we gave credits and sources for the material in a then popular mentalism book. We were, in fact, roundly criticized for what was perceived as a breach of good manners—and many were the speculations concerning what our *real* motives were—because...after all...credits aren't that important, are they?

Thank you for asking.

It is quite simple, really. Only a brief philosophical hopscotch will take us from not caring *who originated something* to *whose property it is* to *who has a right to perform it*—and when we've made that last jump, and think we can perform anything we want without caring how we got it, we've become—or are about to become—thieves.

Let us be very clear about this: *performance material is real property*, and has been so defined in courts of law. Within it, *particular expressions* of common or general ideas are protected. You can't protect the idea of a boy-meets-girl love story; but if the boy is Oliver and the girl is Jenny you can protect the specific LOVE STORY you tell about them.

(NOTE 1993: recent court cases have also found that a performer's *style* can be protected—that the particular *way* he or she performs is the performer's property, quite separate from the performance material itself. McBride and Burton clones please note.)

All this, of course, is obvious to anyone—but I've met an awful lot of magicians and mentalists who, accepting its validity for every other form of entertainment, have never even considered the possibility that it might be true in their own field.

As an analogy to the above example, it is clear that when Richiardi makes a lady float in the air, the general idea of what he's doing is part of the common currency of magic—but if he has her lie on a bare but mist-shrouded floor and begins the levitation sequence in that manner, that distinctive approach is his and should remain so, at least during his lifetime.

¹No. 237, Bonus Insert; Aug. 3, 1979; page 1185.

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Time and again we hear that "... *nobody ever invents anything... there's nothing really new... it's impossible to tell who really created a trick...*" and so on. I'll only say this about such statements: if you step in them you should scrape your shoes.

It's true that, from the point of view of many people in magic, unaccustomed to expending any effort whatsoever in the pursuit of their craft, the search is too much trouble—but if you posed problems concerning the genesis of a magical effect to any student historian or genealogist, they'd consider such tasks to be relatively simple. The majority of modern magical or mental effects have a history of less than two centuries at *most*, which from the standpoint of a competent researcher is no time at all. (There are a few effects—Cups And Balls, say, or the Cut And Restored Rope—whose origins are lost; but these form a very small minority.)

I could go on about this (!)—I could point out that if you spend twenty hours at your job and with the money buy a TV set and I steal it, clearly I'm a thief; it therefore follows that if you spend twenty hours coming up with a presentation for a mental or magical effect, and I steal *that*, I am *at least* as much a thief; more, actually, because I have taken something unique and made it less so, devaluing it. I could point that out, but I won't.

Instead I will relate this to something I said in my very first mentalism book *NEW THOUGHTS FOR OLD*, something which I've had occasion to repeat. Magic and mentalism are supposed to be special—which means, on the most elementary level, that your audience shouldn't be able to move their lips with your patter; you should be a new experience for them, something they have never seen before, no matter how many magicians or mentalists they may have seen.

I have to admit I take a very hard line on this—I won't perform *anything* I've heard is being used by another performer. Let me gently point out that this is hardly a hardship; given the amount of material available, if every performing mentalist in the world changed his act every week, each doing unique effects, it'd take decades for us even to dent the material.

It has always been a puzzle to me that anyone would *ever want* to do an effect already being performed by another; what's the point? At a magic convention, in an *I-can-faro-better-than-you* or *I've-got-more-Zombie-moves* situation, it may be a less than mature approach but it's excusable—but out in the real world of show business it's a luxury we can't afford.

At one point, a few decades ago, copycats nearly destroyed magic as a performance art by making it seem a refuge for incompetents who couldn't be real performers. It could happen again—and while mentalism is not quite as susceptible, the hackneyed mannerisms of many mentalists have already set the field up as a rich subject for parody. Originality has to be applied to *approach* as well as material.

MYSTYX

As of right now, mentalism and magic appear to bear the same relation to popular show business as antique chairs do to the field of furniture—interesting period pieces, often highly regarded by a select few, but not of much practical use to anyone, whatever their opinion.

It deserves better.

TRIDONYM

A popular class of mental effects, falling somewhere between psychometry and Who-Has-What divinations, is that in which you connect various spectators with their writings. There have been many such routines in the literature, from Lyons' *Graphology*² through Astro-Psychometry (Fogel and Corinda) to Phil Goldstein's *Desire*³. Here is the first of two approaches to this effect.

EFFECT

—is the usual one. Here, specifically, three spectators are your subjects. A pad of paper and a ball-point pen are the only properties.

Turning your back, you have each spectator in turn pick an 'alias'—a famous person he or she would like to be—and write it down on the pad, then removing the paper. The three slips of paper are mixed and handed to you.

Of course, you carefully proceed to match each alias with the spectator thinking of it.

METHOD

Here I am going to give you a method...and a *sort-of* method...and a *maybe* method.

The *method* best uses a new pad, though it can be successfully employed with one not quite so fresh. The principle is simply that the *first* paper written on will have only its own writing; the *second* paper will have its writing, of course, and also an impression of the writing on the first paper, caused by the pressure of the ball-point pen; the *third* paper, then, will have its writing and the impression of the writing done on the first two papers.

²*The Jinx*, No. 74; Jan. 6, 1940; page 493.

³THE BLUE BOOK OF MENTALISM, page 4.

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Since you directed each spectator in turn to write, you know the order in which they wrote; knowing the order of the papers obviously matches up the writings.

The *kind of* method depends on a knowledge which, as it happens, is possessed by quite a number of mentalists, i.e., the techniques of graphology. You simply use graphological analysis to determine the general character of the writer, and then match it up with what you know of your three subjects. While this technique can't be extended to any great degree, with only three people it is not all that difficult.

The *maybe* method also depends on your knowledge of the spectators, which should be a bit more complete than required for the previous method. Here you actually do what you are claiming to do; you look at the alias and use your judgment to determine which of your three subjects most likely wrote it.

This may seem a bit far-fetched—but, before I came up with the method first described, I used this technique of genuine analysis quite a bit; it really isn't all that difficult. An outstanding exception to this general success happened those times I would try it on performers of any kind—actors, magicians, politicians and so forth—and, given their ability to present an image which might or might not tally with their real personalities, I suppose I should have known better than to try...

CREDIT

The *alias* presentation is Oscar Weigle's, and it appeared in Parrish and Goodrum's *YOU'D BE SURPRISED*.⁴

⁴Page 11.

PSIDENTIFY

The effect of this is very close to that of the preceding *Tridonym*, but the method is entirely different. It stems from a problem I set myself; I had seen, and often used, several of the routines where index cards are passed out to a number of spectators who write an item down—alias, birthdate, question, etc.—the cards then being mixed and handed to the performer who proceeds to match the cards correctly to the spectators.

It seemed to me that it might be a little more reasonable and less trouble if the performer passed around a pad and had spectators write down something, *all of the spectators writing, in any order, on the top sheet*. Getting the pad back the performer would proceed in revealing who wrote what as usual.

Having come up with a logical procedure, I was absolutely stumped for a workable method for several years; it wasn't until I connected a specific presentation with it that the way to accomplish it became not only obvious but easy.

EFFECT

Showing a spiral-bound pad, you flip open the cover to show that the inside cover has a list of several villains from the James Bond novels—*DR. NO, GOLDFINGER*, etc.—and having done this you write a vertical row of numbers from one to five down the left edge of the top sheet of the pad.

You explain that each spectator in turn is to decide on which of these villains he or she would like to be, and write that name opposite any number on the sheet. In this way, you explain, it is insured that two people don't decide on the same character.

When the spectators have completed their task they hand the pad back to you. You proceed to tell each spectator his or her choice of villain.

METHOD

You accomplish this by doing two things—the first is to limit the field of choice by providing a list from which to choose, and the second is by differentiating the selections within that field in a special way.

Let's consider:

*DR. NO... DRAX... GOLDFINGER... ROSA KLEBB... ERNST STAVRO
BLOFELD... DONOVAN GRANT... LE CHIFFRE...*

...villains all, each with a distinctive nature.

Aside from differing natures, these unpleasant folk have another distinction; their names are 'physically' different enough that you can tell *which one of them is being written from the movement of the pencil*.

DR. NO, for example, is two short movements; *DRAX*, with the same number of letters, is one continuous brief movement. *ROSA KLEBB* and *DONOVAN GRANT* are differentiated by her short first name and the crossed T at the end of his.

It is, in fact, a very elementary form of pencil-reading, not at all difficult to do. Given the basic principle you will appreciate that you can employ it to select names which fit your requirements (i.e., different in the pencil movements they create), using any logical class or group, from heavy-metal rock musicians to demons (there is a difference).

Since you know what the person has written the moment the writing is finished, you could divine the five chosen names without ever getting the pad back. *Don't do this*; the effect as it stands is quite strong—and if, as it seems, you have to *look* at the list to know what the five choices are, the implication is that you don't know anything about their choices *until* you do this. This procedure, I believe, conceals the method a bit better.

NOTE

There are a couple of interlocking considerations we might play with—first, it takes a bit of time for the spectators to write out the list; and second, you don't want to appear to be staring at each spectator as the writing is done.

My thought here is to begin the effect—then, while the spectators are filling out the list, do *another* quick effect which involves the wearing of a blindfold.

The blindfold is a simple faked one; I recommend the Annemann rolled handkerchief⁵. With this, you can, without any fear of detection, observe the spectators as they write.

The effect should be, I repeat, quick—and simple; Annemann's *Par-Optic Vision*⁶ would be perfect.

⁵See *SEALED VISION* by Will Dexter, page 9.

⁶ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 224.

MYSTYX

(NOTE 1993: Alternatively, you might stay with the Bond theme by doing a quick peekbook or riffle-force divination from one of the Bond paperbacks. You'll find information on this in the *MINDSCRIPT 1* section, page 353.)

CREDITS

Pencil-reading has been around a long time; the most direct antecedent of *Psidify* would be Martin Gardner's *Are You Psychic?*⁷

⁷Which eventually appeared in the IRELAND YEARBOOK—1943, page 13—and *Pallbearers Review*, Vol. 5, No. 9; July 1970; page 345.

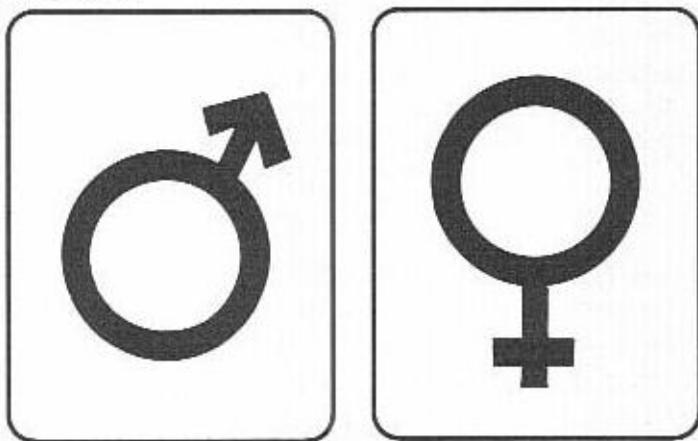
CIRCLET

What follows is simply a visual notion and accompanying method of my own allied with an Annemann presentation and a Peter Warlock concept.

EFFECT

You show two thin boards, each about seven inches by ten in size; the front surfaces have been covered in what appears to be white plastic Contac™-type sheeting.

On one of the boards is the classic symbol for Male; on the other, Female.



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You say you will make a prophecy for a lady; picking up the board with the Female symbol, you write something in the central circle and, without showing it, set the board aside.

You now spread out a deck of cards face up, and instruct the lady to look over the cards and to touch her choice; she does so.

Picking up the other board (with the Male symbol), you write another prediction; this board is also set aside.

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You gather up the cards and spread them again, this time face *down*. A gentleman touches any card, which is then shown.

Taking up the boards, you talk for a moment as appropriate and then turn them around. Both prophecies are, of course, correct.

METHOD

You will hardly need me telling you that the deck is a rough-and-smooth force pack, and that while the lady has a free choice from among the twenty-six indifferent cards, the gentleman's choice is forced. Neither will you be surprised to learn that a one-ahead principle is used.

The exact particulars, however, I think you will find interesting.

The two boards each have a magnet embedded in the center; the neatest way to do this is to cut a hole of the proper size in the board (the thickness of which is determined by the size of the magnet), install the magnet in this hole and then cover both sides of the board with a thin veneer.

One side of each board is then further covered with a sheet of erasable plastic Velleda™ surface, available in art- and office-supply shops.

The best way to put the actual symbols on the surface is to cut them out of black Contac or other self-adhesive sheets, or to use black tape. It's no good trying to paint the designs on; they will chip away with any use at all.

This completed, the only other thing required is a disk of thin tin, identical in size to the circle portion of the symbols; this also is covered with the Velleda sheeting.

Preparation for performance only requires writing in the name of the force card on the Male board (in the circle, of course) and then covering it with the disk—which is held in place by the magnet. Thus both boards appear blank at the beginning of the routine.

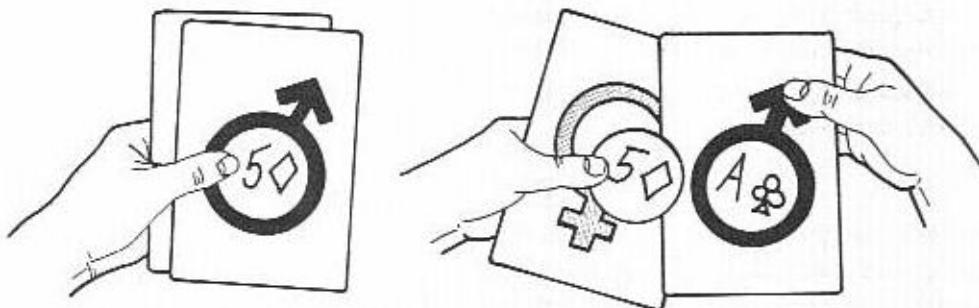
Saying you will write a prophecy for a lady, you pick up the Female board and write anything you like in the circle, setting the board aside without showing the writing.

The lady then makes her choice from among the facing cards of the force pack.

You then say you will make a prophecy for a gentleman; picking up the Male board, you write the name of the card just chosen by the lady on the disk which is clinging to the board. This board is likewise set aside and the gentleman makes his 'selection' from the now face-down force pack.

Picking up the two boards, you bring them together as you talk, the Female board behind the Male. Your thumb contacts the disk and the two boards are slid apart—but the thumb keeps its pressure and the disk is thus transferred from the Male to the Female board, where the thumb aligns it correctly in the symbol circle.

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This done you can turn the boards around to show Supernaturally Successful Scership!

(NOTE 1993: This effect is now available in a beautifully-produced version manufactured by Tōn Onosaka of Japan's Magic Land.)

CREDITS

The *Lady-and-Gentleman* plot for two predictions is Annemann's⁸, with a nod to Al Baker's Two Souls⁹. The application of a rough-and-smooth pack to dual-choice routines is an idea of Peter Warlock's.¹⁰

⁸See his SH-H-H—! IT'S A SECRET, page 43.

⁹A description of this originally marketed effect can be found on page 17 of Hugard's ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARD TRICKS.

¹⁰See Stickertime in Willane's METHODS FOR MIRACLES No. 7, page 7.

SYNCHROWAVE

In *Synchroincidence* (page 31) I described my approach to a card-matching effect. With it I wanted to eliminate weak spots in preceding versions of the effect.

Of course *Synchroincidence* had its own weak spot, and I've created this version to...ah, there's no end to it!

EFFECT

You hand a blue-backed deck to a spectator for shuffling, while you do the same with a red deck.

This done, you spread the blue-backed deck face down on the table. Seeming to study the spectator for a moment, you look through your red deck and remove a card; let's say it's the Four of Diamonds.

Now you slowly pass your extended forefinger over the spread of blue-backed cards, and stop on the card indicated by the spectator. At this point the spectator has the option of changing his mind and selecting another card. In any case, a card is decided on.

You slowly remove it from the spread and turn it face up—and it, too, is a Four of Diamonds.

METHOD

This is accomplished by a very simple move, presently to be described, and by the use of what must be one of the more peculiar faked decks in the literature.

The deck is best described as a *Color-Changing-Rough-And-Smooth-Double-Backed-Force-Deck*.

Well, maybe that's not the *best* description...

...the deck consists of twenty-six identical pairs of cards. Each pair is made up of a blue-backed Four of Diamonds (for

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example), roughed on its face, and a red-blue double-backer, roughed on the blue side; the pairs of cards are assembled, of course, with the two roughed surfaces facing each other.

The assembled deck, red side up, has a single red-backed card on top; this card is *not* roughed on its face. This deck is in a red case; an ordinary blue deck is in a blue case.

In performance, you hand out the blue deck for shuffling; as the spectator does this he will note that it is an ordinary and complete deck. You overhand shuffle the 'red' deck quite freely, showing all those red backs, and either keep track of the single card with a jog, or trim it short, so at the finish of your shuffle you can bring it back to the top.

This done, you execute a sort of half-pass—by which I mean that you turn over the rest of the pack under this top single card.

You now hold the gaffed pack from above in your right hand and take the blue pack from the spectator into your left hand in dealing position.

Turning to the table, you note that you left the card cases or some other object in the way; you place the gaffed deck into your left hand above the blue deck, keeping the two separate with the fingers, and remove the clutter from the table.

Your right hand now comes back to your left and removes the gaffed deck, but the left thumb draws off the top (red-side-up regular) card onto the genuine blue deck beneath. The right hand now immediately spreads the gaffed deck, blue side up, on the table; the spectators see what is apparently your red deck still in your hand.

You pause for a moment to allow that red back to register, and then turn the deck face up. Spreading through the cards, you locate the Four of Diamonds and remove it from the pack, dropping it face up on the table. In doing this take reasonable care not to expose its back (which is supposed to be red but is of course blue).

The spectator directs you to a particular card (actually a pair)—and as you remove it from the spread you separate it from the card below; since a blue back shows on this lower card, all seems fair.

It remains only to turn the force card face up and show the perfect match.

NOTES

When you put the Four of Diamonds from the regular pack on the table, you put the supposedly red-backed deck down on the table a bit to the rear of it (the red back of the top card showing) to subtly reinforce the back color.

If you want to live dangerously, instead of simply taking out the Four of Diamonds yourself you could do a classic force of it—the deck being held face up, of course, and the card being touched by the spectator rather than removed (unless you *really* want to live dangerously!).

MYSTYX

CREDITS

As with *Synchroincidence*, the basic idea—and the genesis of the deck switch—come from Robert Parrish's effect *Synchronism* in the Parrish and Weigle book DO THAT AGAIN¹¹. A related effect, *Contrasting Prediction* by Phil Goldstein, is to be found in his book NOTIONS¹².

¹¹Page 32.

¹²Page 5.

SPYWAVE

Continuing our adventures among the Rough and the Smooth, we come to a new version of *Spyhole* (page 313). The group from which the selection is made remains the same, but a new approach to the revelation of your prophecy is here described.

EFFECT

You show two packets of cards. One is a full set of alphabet cards; the other is a deck of twenty-five word cards, each card bearing one of the following words:

PING	SPONGE	SON	PIG	SAGE
PONG	SPA	SING	ION	PIE
SONG	SIN	SINGE	AGE	SAG
EON	PINE	PAGE	NAG	SNAG
SINE	SPINE	SPIN	ONE	IN

You take the alphabet pack behind your back for a moment, saying you are going to arrange a prophecy. Bringing the cards out, you hold the packet up on display while a spectator mixes the word cards and then freely makes a selection from among them.

This done, you slowly spread your pack of alphabet cards as you do so it is seen that a number of cards have been reversed at various points in the pack. When you have spread all the cards, you lift the fan to show its back and reveal the identities of the reversed cards.

It is seen that the reversed cards spell out, *in order from left to right*, the selected word.

METHOD

The alphabet deck is gaffed, of course, and to make it you will need a complete set of the twenty-six letters and one extra E card.

MYSTYX

Remove from the deck the letters E-S-P-I-O-N-A-G-E; these cards are treated with roughing fluid on *both* sides.

Nine of the remaining cards are roughed on the backs; the other nine on the faces.

The cards are then assembled into three-card packets. The top card, face down, is roughed on its face; the middle card (from your ESPIONAGE set), face up, roughed on both sides; and the bottom (face) card, face down, roughed on its back.

The packets are then assembled into a complete deck in the order of the word ESPIONAGE, so that the beginning E is reversed in the packet on the face of the deck; the S, also reversed, is the fifth card from the face—and so on.

A study of the list of words will show that any of the twenty-five may be spelled from the letters in the word ESPIONAGE, *in the same order as they occur in that word*.

Your apparent altering of the cards behind your back is simply bluff; you do nothing. You should, however, do enough fiddling around with the cards so that it would seem you've had time to do something; if, as it happens, the spectator chooses the word SPONGE, you will be showing six reversed cards, so the cards should stay behind your back long enough for it to be possible for you to have performed the supposed necessary actions.

After the word card has been chosen you spread through the face-up alphabet packet, pushing each of the three-card packets as one card and silently spelling ESPIONAGE. Of course each time you come to a letter which appears in the chosen word you separate the three cards to show the reversed card. In your count each three-card packet counts as one letter in ESPIONAGE.

When you have gone through all the necessary letters and the reversed cards are visible in the fan, you simply lift the fan to show these reversed cards—and it is seen that they correctly spell the chosen word.

CREDITS

The preparing of cards to show reversals via three-card packets is the invention of Peter Warlock¹³.

¹³See his PATTERNS FOR PSYCHICS, page 17; and later *Pentagram*, Vol. 11, No. 10; July 1957; page 75.

TURNARY

Like the foregoing, this owes a good deal to Peter Warlock; it is, in fact, an elaboration of one of his creations combined with other concepts.

EFFECT

You show three wrapped packages—numbered 1, 2 and 3 in bold black marker—and hand one each to three spectators.

Mention is made of the fact that there are three basic ways of making choices: first, simply making a decision; second, making a choice from a specific group; and third, making a blind—random—choice. You'll attempt to influence choices made in each of these ways.

You remove a deck of cards from your pocket, along with a slip of paper, and invite forward the spectator holding Package No. 1; she is to decide on any card in the pack and make a note of it on the slip of paper.

For the spectator with Package No. 2, you spread out the cards face up and she simply names one.

The spectator holding Package No. 3 touches a card at random from the deck spread face *down* for his selection.

This completed...

...you ask for Package No. 1 and open it, revealing a cased deck of cards; you spread through them with faces toward the audience and one card is seen to be reversed—back out. You ask the first spectator to name her thought-of card, and when the card is turned around it is, of course, correct.

Opening Package No. 2, you show the second spectator's card to be likewise reversed.

You direct the third spectator to open his own package and spread through the cards to find the reversed one; he does so,

MYSTYX

and when his chosen card (unseen up to now) is turned over (or taken from his pocket) it matches the reversed card.

METHOD

There are few surprises here. The first spectator writes her selection on the paper with the deck as a writing surface; this deck is in a Mental Masterpiece case, thus when you remove the deck you get an impression of the writing and know her card.

This deck is a rough-and-smooth forcing pack, and the selections made by the second and third spectator are just as in *Circlet* (page 688)—e.g., the second makes a free choice from among the twenty-six indifferent cards as the deck is spread face up, and the third gets a force card when the deck is spread face down.

Concerning the packaged decks handed to the spectators:

Deck No. 1 is a standard Ultra-Mental Deck; Deck No. 3 is an ordinary deck with the force card reversed in the center.

Deck No. 2 is a bit more special. To make it you take from a double-faced pack those cards one side of which will show the same faces as those visible when the rough-and-smooth forcing pack is spread out face up.

These twenty-six faces are roughed; each is paired with a double-backed card, one side of which has been roughed. Unless you want to memorize the order you must mark the upper surface of the pair to indicate the card that will be revealed face up beneath it.

The twenty-six pairs are then assembled into a deck. To simplify locating the correct pair, you might arrange them so that the hidden surfaces in this pack are in the same order, or sequence, as the visible cards in the rough-and-smooth forcing pack. In this way, when the spectator names his card, you can see where it is in the spread and thus estimate about how far down it will be in Deck No. 2 which you hold.

Performance is straightforward; after the selections as indicated you open Deck No. 1 and show the named card reversed as per the standard Ultra-Mental handling. You know this card from the Mental Masterpiece case and thus are able to show the reversed card *before* the spectator names it.

Deck No. 2 is handled in more interesting fashion; you spread it *faces* to the audience and split at the proper pair. You will see the *face* of the named card—but the audience will see the *back* of the double-backer next to it.

Given this situation, you can now turn the *whole spread of cards around*, showing the face of the named card. It is impossible for the spectators to know that the face and back belong to two different cards!

Deck No. 3 is perfectly ordinary, and the revelation in the spectator's hands proceeds as described.

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My reason for describing this routine—aside from the logical-seeming sequence of choices—is that for each revelation in turn the method closes doors on the analysis of the procedure. In the first and third cases you do not even appear to know the name of the selection; similarly, each revelation seems even more clear-cut than the previous one.

Granted, these may be subtle points—but for the right situations they can be very important and valuable.

CREDITS

The basic structure of this routine is based on that of Peter Warlock's *Double, Double* which appeared in his magazine *Pentagram*¹⁴. The double-face/double-back deck is the invention of Lewis Ganson, and was used in his *Mickey Fin Routine* which appeared in *The Gen* magazine¹⁵. The Mental Masterpiece case is, of course, Annemann's.¹⁶

¹⁴Vol. 13, No. 5; Feb. 1959; page 35.

¹⁵Vol. 9, No. 11; Mar. 1954; page 325.

¹⁶ANNEMANN'S MENTAL BARGAIN EFFECTS, page 5.

BLUECUE

In MYXTYR I described *Standout* (page 654), an approach to assisting a spectator in finding a chosen card; here's another way, coming at the problem from, ah, the other side...

EFFECT

Spreading a deck of cards face up before a spectator you have him decide on one. Moving back to your table, you ribbon-spread the deck and invite another spectator to take part. The deck is spread face down.

You tell her to let her hand move over the cards and when she feels there is something special about one card in particular to let her hand drop on the card.

The card is pushed out of the spread and the first spectator is asked to name his selection. He does so—and of course the lady's choice proves to be correct.

METHOD

You need two blue-backed decks with similar yet distinct patterns. Rough the faces of twenty-six cards from one deck and the backs of twenty-six cards from the other, and assemble these two sets of cards into pairs in the usual fashion. Neither order nor identity of the cards is important, though it's probably better if you use a random selection of twenty-six for the first set, and the complementary twenty-six which will complete a deck from the second set.

In performance you go to a spectator well away from your table. You spread out the pack face up and ask him to decide on one. *"Just touch any one,"* you add, and you do not have to make this loud enough for everyone to hear.

You have, of course, been spreading the deck from left to right in the usual fashion. When the spectator touches a card you

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break the deck at that point momentarily, perhaps murmuring, "This one? The action, however, is not as innocent as it appears.

What actually happens is that your right fingers draw off the lower card of the pair, while the upper card remains at the face of the cards in the left hand. After the briefest of pauses your hands come together again.



The effect of this is to transpose the positions of the upper and lower cards of the pair. The deck is squared.

Returning to the table, you turn the cards face down and give them a brisk ribbon-spread. Because of the transposing, you will see that one card with an odd back is visible; this is in fact the chosen card.

So you see where this is going...the lady is invited up and directed as described; she pushes out the 'odd' card, and the effect is concluded.

Since all the cards are blue backed, unless the audience is right on top of the table everything will appear fair—at the same time, up close the difference will be clearly discernible.

NOTE

Depending on which two backs you pick, you can make the indication as subtle or as broad as you want. With a subtle difference it can often happen—as with *Standout*—that the spectator really doesn't know how she or he makes the correct choice.

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CREDITS

The move as such (the transposing of two cards in a rough-and-smooth deck for later display) is Ed Marlo's¹⁷. A precursor of this routine might be *Cagliostro's Spectacles*, an effect of Bruce Elliott's which appeared in his *Phoenix*¹⁸.

¹⁷See page 13 of INVISIBLE SECRETS REVEALED by Eddie Fields and Michael Schwartz.

¹⁸No. 45; Oct. 8, 1943; page 184.

CAROUSELL

What follows here is a routine for the discernment of three thought-of cards. Certainly it is not for everyone, but there are those peculiar readers who will adapt it and play with the angles and end up with something very special.

EFFECT

You are seated at a table across from three spectators. One of them thoroughly shuffles the deck and then you explain that you are going to have choices made in three different ways. (Sound familiar?)

The first spectator takes the deck under the table and turns roughly half the cards face up on the rest. He brings the cards out far enough to spread through and take the first face down card; without looking at it, he takes it from the deck and places it on the seat of his chair (*where no one can get at it without you knowing*).

The halves of the pack are brought up and placed in front of the second and third spectators.

Picking up the cards in front of the second spectator, you spread them before her, running the cards from your left hand to right as you ask her simply to think of one.

She does so; giving the packet a few cuts, you drop it on the table.

Turning to the third spectator, you say, *"We've got about twenty-six cards here. Think of a number between one and twenty-five; now I am going to deal the cards face up, and as I do so I want you to remember the card that appears at your number. I will deal through all the cards, so don't tell me when you've seen your card, I don't want any hints."*

You suit the action to the word, dealing the half pack face up onto the table, and the spectator thinks of a card.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

As you ask the two spectators if they are sure they have their cards fixed firmly in mind, you riffle the halves of the deck together and give the full deck a mix.

Obviously, at this point you are going to name the three cards, revealing their identities in a (hopefully!) mysterious way...

...but since the manner of the revelation is inextricably bound up with the method, let us proceed directly there.

METHOD

To backtrack a bit—when, at the beginning, the shuffled deck is returned to you and you put it under the table, you single-handedly flip over and square the top card, glimpsing it.

Thus when the first spectator turns half the pack face *up*, the glimpsed card becomes the top card of the face down lower half; this is the card he sits on.

Spectator Two is the toughie, because this one is based on sheer technique. It is only as you begin to spread that you tell her to think of one—up until then she doesn't know what she's supposed to do, and by the time she realizes it several cards have gone by. A moment later you say, "*Do you have one?*" and lower the cards, getting a break beneath the last one you have spread. You keep the break as you cut the cards a few times and then cut at the break. If you have done all this properly the chances are very strong that the thought-of card is one of the half-dozen or so cards at the face of the half pack.

The third spectator's choice is completely legitimate and is done just as described.

However—when you riffle the halves together—you don't really; you do a pull-through, strip-out, whatever, so that Spectator Two's half deck ends up on the bottom of the reassembled pack.



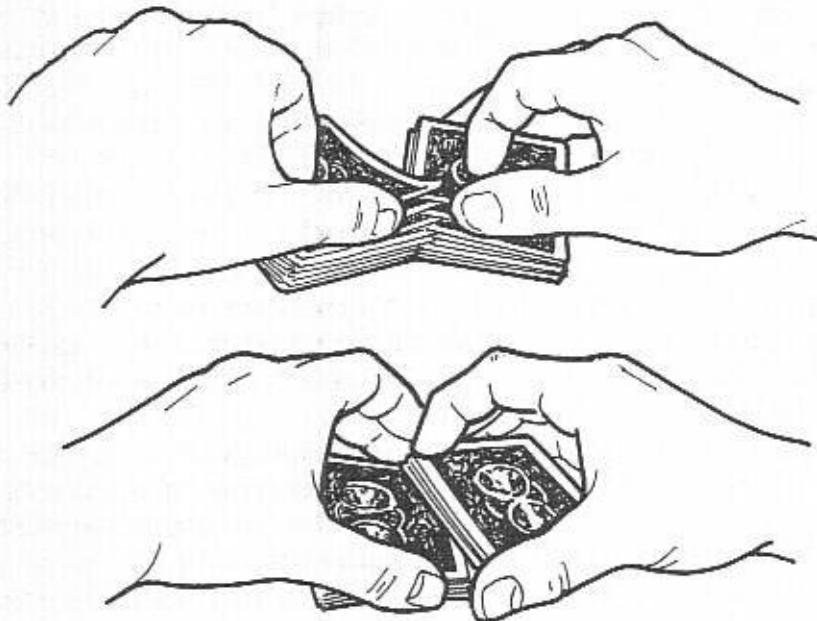
Note: Regarding the false shuffle: as I have had occasion to remark in the past, I am by no stretch of the imagination what might be called a cardman—thus for me to do something as a regular thing, it has to be simple and convincing.

The false shuffle I use in this situation is one not highly regarded among the *cardoscenti*, but it gets the job done and is quite convincing to lay observers. It is the Hugh Johnston shuffle (also known under many other names) and can be found in Mahendra's AMAZING CARD MIRACLES¹⁹ and other places.

Briefly, the cards are interlaced with a riffle in the form of a V, point toward you. The cards apparently are then pushed together by the cupped hands; what actually happens is that the fingers of one hand lift the front end of the half they hold, and the half is brought above the other half at the outer end as it is stripped apart at the inner end, in a pivoting motion. The cupped hands conceal this action.

¹⁹Page 17.

MYSTYX



This is, as it happens, one of the few strip-out shuffles that can be done away from the table, resting the cards momentarily against the leg.



Now you can give the deck a second shuffle of any sort that will retain the bottom stock; not a difficult problem.

This completed, you ask the second spectator to think of her card; turning the pack toward yourself, you note the face card and then cut the deck, completing the cut—simply to get this group to the center; it'd be a little odd if the spectator's card just happened to be at the face of the pack.

Now, of course, you pump to determine the card. An important point here is that you do *not* eliminate down to only one card *from the spectator's point of view*.

By this I mean: let us say that you have determined that the spectator's card is red, and there's only one red card among your six 'possibles'. You stop the actual pumping right there; from the spectator's point of view it could still be any one of twenty-six cards.

However you do not stop the *action* of the discernment; instead you say something like, "...fine...now get an image of the suit...excellent...and now visualize the whole card...yes, yes, that's fine..." As you talk you leaf back and forth among the cards, finally taking out the spectator's card. Aside from the more obvious dramatic aspects of handling it this way, by adding these aspects you create a situation where the times the spectator concentrated and said nothing far outnumber the times when she spoke.

So Spectator Two's card is face down in front of her; you turn to Three and ask him to concentrate.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

'Now that I am warmed up,' you say, *'I may be able to do this a bit quicker.'* Indeed, you run through the cards and with only a bit of hesitation take out a card—and the reason is that this time you know what card you're looking for, which is the *mate* of the card you glimpsed at the beginning, the card now being sat on by Spectator One. I know, it's a bit odd... trust me.

Having done this, and placed the card in front of Spectator Three, you turn to Spectator One. As you do so you glance back at Three and say idly, *'What was your card, anyway?'* He tells you, and you nod with a vaguely smug and self-satisfied expression, not a difficult maneuver for most mentalists...

...you point out to Spectator One that it would be difficult to read his mind since he as yet doesn't know the identity of his card. He is asked to rectify this by briefly peeking at the card.

Pointing out that since his card is not in the deck you can't very well find it, so you'll do the next best thing; you will find its mate. Thus if he is thinking of the Seven of Clubs you will find the Seven of Spades; if the Queen of Hearts you will find the Queen of Diamonds, and so forth.

Running through the cards you seem a bit confused (it is possible that this may not entirely be acting) and finally draw halfway out of the pack two cards, saying you are not sure which it is.

In fact, the two cards are Spectator Three's card (which you will recall was named by him a few moments before) and a card which is one spot off being a correct mate for Spectator One's card.

That sounds a bit confusing, so an example: the card that One is sitting on is the Ace of Spades. Thus you will have put its correct mate, the Ace of Clubs, in front of Spectator Two. The two cards you now have projecting from the deck will be the Two of Clubs and that named by Spectator Three.

'I'm really not sure which one,' you say, *'so let me do this; I am going to show you one of the cards, but I don't want you to say anything—but if it does match your card for color and value, think YES; if it doesn't, think NO. All right?'*

You now take out the Two of Clubs (in this example) and show it to the spectator. After a pause, you say, *'No... no, not this one.'* You have let the other two spectators see the face of the Two of Clubs, and now you shove it back in the pack and take the other projecting card and put it in front of Spectator One—commenting, apparently as afterthought, *'...but I was very close, wasn't I?'*

He will have to agree and you nod as if this confirms your mental discernment.

Now—and about time—come the revelations.

You ask Spectator Two to name her card. She does so and you turn over the card in front of her. As the spectators are taking this in you scoop the other two cards together so that Three's card goes *above* One's.

Turning to Three you say, *'You thought of a number and remembered the card at that number—by any chance was the number you thought of fourteen or*

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seventeen?" These are popular choices; if the spectator says yes you've created an additional effect, and if not it only adds to the suspense before you turn over the card and show it correct.

Finally you have One bring out the card he's been sitting on and show it; he does so, and you ask him what card would be the mate for his card.

He names the mate card, and you turn over the last card to show it is the card just named.

NOTES

You handle that last revelation as indicated so that the other spectators don't have to figure out if you're right. If it seems from that thought that I might feel some spectators are a bit slow...

...I might point out that if you are familiar with a card-tabulating system for discerning a missing card, as described by Lorayne²⁰, Fulves²¹ and others, you may eliminate the opening force and incorporate the principle into the routine with virtually no other change.

This handling—which is the one I personally use—goes as follows:

The first spectator is allowed to shuffle the deck freely and then to remove one card and sit on it without noting its face. The remainder of the deck is returned to you and you cut it into approximately equal halves.

For the second selection you do the spread as indicated, and cut so the target group is at the face of that half.

You pick up the other half and deal through them face up, asking the third spectator to remember the card at his thought-of number but to give no indication as to when that selection has been noted. You, of course, keep a running total—and at the finish you casually cut a card that equals the final value to the face of that packet. *Remember this card.*

Now you V-shuffle the cards together, so that Spectator Two's half is on the bottom. Turning the faces toward you, you tell the second spectator to concentrate on her card and you start looking through the deck. Actually you are tabulating the values up to and including the previously noted card, which gives you by subtraction the value of the first spectator's card.

Remembering this, you go back to the face of the deck (where you've put the groups of 'possibles' for Spectator Two) and as before make your best guess as to the second spectator's card, placing it down.

Turning to Spectator Three, you have him think of his card; since you know the value of Spectator One's card, you go through the deck, determine which one is missing and remove the mate, placing it down for Spectator Three.

As in the first version of the routine, you ask the second spectator her card as you turn back to the first spectator: you have the spectator remove his hidden card and you finish the routine as before.

²⁰THE EPITOME LOCATION.

²¹CARD COUNTING.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

It will happen that from time to time you will miss completely on Two's card. When this happens, you don't fret; only shows you're for real... and you can always do something else with Spectator Two if you feel it's important.

CREDITS

All I am claiming here is a specific routine, which has been cobbled together from various sources over the years. The 'wrong but close' subtlety is Clayton Rawson's²², and the false shuffle I use is, as mentioned, that of Hugh Johnston. Lorayne's EPITOME LOCATION and a specific routine within it—*Triple Mate*²³—were also obvious inspirations.

²²See Hugard's *Magic Monthly*, Vol. 7, No. 9; Feb. 1950; page 629.

²³Page 25.

INCREDITABLE

Here are a couple of quick thoughts regarding one of the few things made out of plastic that wears people out instead of the other way around—the credit card.

CREDITOUCH

EFFECT: You claim a highly developed sense of touch and offer to prove it with a borrowed credit card. The card is handed to you behind your back and—apparently by the sense of touch alone—you are able to call off its number.

METHOD:—is similar to the Silly Putty™ gag for reading print; Silly Putty could in fact be used, but I prefer a wad of the white stick-tack doughy material used for sticking up notices, papers, etc. The angle here is that you press the putty on the card from the *back*, giving you a perfect impression of the numbers in relief just as they appear on the card, so you don't have to worry about deciphering reversed numbers.

Of course you get the glimpse when you bring the hand not holding the card to the front as you turn your back on the spectators—so they can watch your sensitive fingers probe over the number.

CREDITELL

EFFECT: From four different spectators you borrow credit cards and seal them in envelopes. Mixing the envelopes, you number them from one to four in random fashion.

Each spectator is asked in turn to name a number, and gets the appropriate envelope. When the envelopes are opened, it is seen that each person has found his own credit card.

METHOD: Listen, if you don't know the method to this one you're not reading this book closely—I've used it in many different presentations and this is just one more...

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

...the envelopes are marked so you know whose is which; you only simulate writing the numbers on the envelopes and actually write nothing.

Then, when a spectator names a number, you locate the corresponding envelope and secretly write the named number on it with a nail-writer; that's all there is to it.

This is basically just a take-off on Annemann's *Volition*²⁴—but credit cards are, of course, unique, and of far more importance to a spectator than a playing card.

The basic principle used here is believed to be the invention of Basil Horwitz.

²⁴*The Jinx*, No. 95; page 589.

PENTAMONEY

Following logically enough from the preceding items, this is my solution to what I considered a serious presentational flaw in a standard mental effect.

EFFECT

You show five sealed envelopes; handing them to a spectator for mixing, you blindfold yourself. The spectator is then instructed to deal the envelopes in a row on the table, and to tell you when that has been done.

The spectator so states, and you tell her to choose one—but not to open it just yet. Three other spectators likewise take envelopes, and may put them in their pockets or behind their backs or otherwise out of sight. The last envelope is handed to you and you remove your blindfold.

"I've got some good news for you—and some bad news," you tell the four spectators. *"The good news is that whatever is in your envelope is yours to keep—and each envelope contains real money—a bill—a hundred..."*

You pause.

"...the bad news," you continue, *"is that only one of these bills is U.S. currency."* You point to one of the spectators. *"You, for example, look like the sort of person who'd be psychically drawn to the land of sunlight... fiesta... open your envelope and take out that hundred-peso note."* She does so.

You continue, revealing the contents of the other three envelopes—in each case a bill from a different foreign country, giving a very brief 'reading' of the location as indicated above.

You finish by opening your own envelope and removing the U.S. \$100.00 bill.

METHOD

The five envelopes, each of which contains a different bill from a foreign country, are marked. After they have been mixed by the spectator and laid in a row on the table you read the sequence of marks—not difficult, since you're using a fake blindfold. Once that is done it will be very easy to see (!) who takes which envelope.

In your pocket is a thumb-tip with the \$100.00 in it, and you get this in position on your thumb at any convenient time; of course in the denouement, you rip off one end of the envelope and apparently take out the bill, actually taking it out of the tip in the usual fashion and leaving the tip in the envelope.

And that's all there is to the method.

NOTES

In the interests of logic and consistency, all five foreign bills should be folded the same way as the U.S. bill; this also helps in making the envelopes look the same. Letter envelopes could be used but pay envelopes are probably better.

What particular five bills you use will depend in part on what's available, in part on how much you want to give away; as indicated, they would be hundreds for the sake of the patter line—but you shouldn't have much difficulty in finding quite inexpensive bills at any foreign exchange.

The flaw of the standard Bank Night presentation is, of course, that the performer teases the spectators with the possibility of winning money, and then ends up keeping it—and no matter whether they think it is kept by cheating or by psychic powers, it is still a lousy subtext.

In this routine, on the other hand, you have the sequence of divinations which should play interestingly—and each of the people taking part *does* end up with some money, and ain't you the swell and talented psychic?

CREDITS

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Milbourne Christopher, in his *FIFTY TRICKS WITH A THUMB TIP*, credited Hen Fetsch with the idea of accomplishing a Bank Night effect by employing a thumb-tip.²⁵ However, in 1947, roughly a year before Christopher's book reached print, Fleischman and Gunther explained the same idea under the title *Bunk And Bunco* in their *TOP SECRETS* collection.²⁶

²⁵Page 16.

²⁶Page 9.

PYROTICA

What follows is basically a book test—but not for every performer or every show. It requires a special situation where an atmosphere of believability can be generated, and a performer whose acting can sustain it.

EFFECT

You show three books; the titles refer to such things as occultism, witchcraft and demonology. You explain that you will use these books in a test of telepathy.

You select a spectator; he chooses one of the three books and moves some distance away from you. You pick up one of the remaining books and have another spectator call stop as you riffle the pages with your thumb. The page thus stopped at is called out to the other spectator, who turns to that page in his book.

The spectator concentrates on the first line of the page (you have illustrated this action with the book you hold) and you attempt to get a mental impression of his thoughts.

Things seem to go awry; after a few false starts you have not made any progress and appear to be getting a bit upset and tense. "Concentrate on the words," you urge the spectator; "Make a strong visual image. See it in your mind as vividly as you can—and then send that to me, project that to me with all your will!"

After a few further comments along the same lines you fall silent, your face tense, straining for the thought in the spectator's mind. The tense moment stretches out—and then—the book in your hands suddenly bursts into flames!

Startled, you drop it to the floor; then, seizing a cloth of some sort, you smother the flames. When the audience reaction has died down, you ask the spectator to read aloud the line he has been concentrating on. The spectator reads: "... enveloped in the flames of Hell..."

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After letting this sink in, you comment that when you asked the spectator to project his thoughts you didn't think the results would be so spectacular. "It's a good thing," you say, "that I didn't decide to use a murder mystery...!"

METHOD

Very little needs to be told the experienced mentalist re the working of this little theatre piece. One of the three books is a Hot Book covered with an appropriate book jacket; the second book has pages trimmed to force certain page numbers, which correlate with pages in the third book bearing the desired force word in the first line of the page (see page 355 for details on this kind of procedure). (Note: if at all possible the facing page should be a full-page illustration, preferably of the same subject as the line; though the spectator has been given a page number specifically, it is better to leave as little as possible open to chance.)

After riffle-forcing the page on the spectator, you simply put down the book you're holding and pick up the Hot Book. (I suppose I should mention that the spectator gets the proper book by equivoque, specifically Annemann's pick-up-two-hand-me-one force.) All eyes are on the spectator at this point, so no one will pay any attention to your actions or attach any importance to them.

Once you've got the Hot Book, you might in vague pantomime indicate to the spectator that "*—you've opened to the page, you're visualizing the images...*" In making this gesture, of course, you can only open the cover of the book, since most such gaffed books don't have pages. You don't have to do any of this if you don't want to, since it is not really necessary to justify the presence of the book in your hand; it simply appears that you've forgotten about it in the, ah, heat of the moment...

...curiously, you'll find that this effect will work at either end of the performance spectrum—as a light comedy piece or as a heavy dramatic situation—but it won't play at all in the middle range of mentalism. The reason is clear; since the culmination of the effect is a spectacular physical phenomenon, it has to be taken either as a trick or a gag with a bit of mystery attached, or as a bizarre and frightening real occurrence. (Remember the sudden flaring of the candle in the attic in the film of THE EXORCIST?)

Put it in the right place—and treat it in the right way—and I think you'll find this to be very effective performance material.

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CREDITS

The book force is, as mentioned, Annemann's;²⁷ the riffle-forcing of the page, an adaptation of the card move, owes something to Chan Canasta, among others.

The Hot Book is the invention of Billy McComb.²⁸

²⁷*The Jinx*, No. 2; Nov. 1934; page 8.

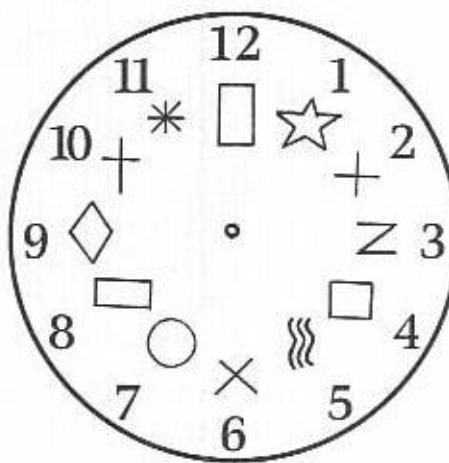
²⁸See his FIRST BOOK OF WILLIAM, page 32.

SYMBOLD

What follows is a very straightforward divination of two thought-of symbols; it is mercifully direct and visually interesting.

EFFECT

You show a large plastic clock dial; it is without any hands, but next to each number is a geometrical symbol or design.



stipulate that here it must be an *odd* number. In this way you insure that the two spectators will not think of the same design, you explain.

The second spectator likewise notes the design opposite his thought-of number, and the dial is set aside.

You ask the two spectators to concentrate on their designs—and after the proper dramatic pause you name the two designs being thought of; you are, of course, correct.

Mentioning that you will have two spectators take part, you approach one and ask her to think of a number between one and twelve; your only stipulation is that it is an *even* number. You hold up the dial and she makes a mental note of the design at her thought-of number.

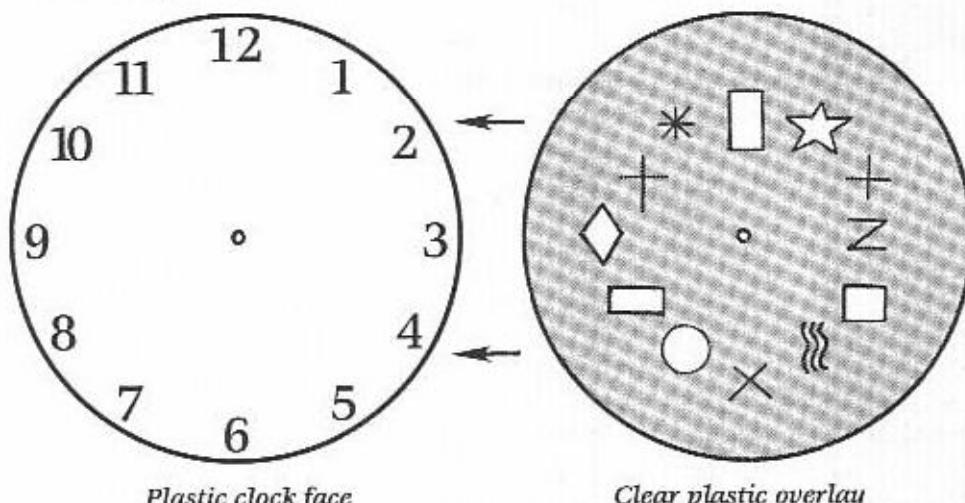
Going to another person, you have him also decide on a number; you

METHOD

The working is partly dependent on the ambiguity of some of the designs, and partly on the way the dial is constructed.

For this construction you will need a large plastic clock face, the larger the better. The simplest way to get this is to buy one of those OUT—WILL RETURN AT signs which use such a dial. With shears you cut away the 'sign' part and remove the hands.

Your second item is a disk of clear plastic the same size as your dial. It is on this disk that you draw the designs in a thick non-erase marker stroke. This disk is then placed against the dial and fastened there by a rivet or spread-fastener through the center. (Note: the designs should be on the *inner side* of the disk; this will protect them from being wiped away, and also make them appear similar to the numbers, since both will be viewed *through* the plastic surface.)



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In performance, you hold up the dial and show it briefly to the audience; at this point one of the rectangles is opposite the number 12.

The first spectator thinks of an even number, and notes the design at that position. As a look at the illustration on the previous page will show, she must think of either a RECTANGLE or a CROSS.

As you go over to the second spectator, your thumb moves the design disk one position counterclockwise, so that now the rectangles and crosses are opposite the *odd* numbers. The second spectator thinks of a design as described, and the dial is set aside.

It now only remains to name the RECTANGLE and CROSS as the two thought-of designs; both spectators agree and the effect is concluded.

MYSTYX

NOTES

As with the *Tossed-Out Deck*, the two spectators should be at widely separated points so they don't have a chance to compare notes and perhaps find that they have both thought of the same design.

You may, if you wish, draw the designs in various colors to make them appear more dissimilar. It should be noted that you have each spectator decide on a number *before* you hold up the dial, and you give the spectator just enough time to note the design; no time is given then or earlier for the spectators to make a study of the designs on the dial.

Since the disk only has to move through a thirty-degree rotation, you may wish to make a little stop-tab arrangement so the disk can't move any farther. It is important that the design disk does not move while being shown to the spectators, as they should of course think that designs and numbers are on the same surface and immovable in relation to each other; keep a firm grip on the disk to insure this.

A presentational possibility to be considered would involve doing this effect as an opener—it is, in fact, excellent for such a purpose since it can be done in less than a minute—and then later on bringing it out for a clock dial routine.

The idea here is that the dial brought out for this latter routine is apparently the same one; actually it bears twelve *different* designs, two crosses and two rectangles having been replaced by other figures. This dial might be used in conjunction with a packet of design cards matching those on the dial, the spinning clock hand stopping at a chosen design along the lines of the usual routine.

Since you *are* using a clock dial, you might conceivably develop a patter line regarding the differing ways in which 'day people' and 'night people' think, asking one of each to take part and to think of their favorite hour.

CREDITS

The use of what I call the *Rashomon* principle—i.e., the spectator assuming that because one item of a group is his or hers, the others must belong to other spectators taking part (used in such effects as *Smith Myth*) in its application to mental effects is generally credited to David Hoy.

Symbol is an outgrowth of an effect called O'Dancevan's Secret which was marketed by Al Mann.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

CROSS-REFERENCE

Synchrowave: see *Synchroincidence*—page 31

Spywave: see *Spyhole*—page 313

BlueCue: see *Standout*—page 654

FYNYS

[1985]

TO BEGIN, SOME observations on mentalism as it fits into the larger world of show business and professional entertainment.

Both magic and mentalism contain a built-in contradiction which make them difficult to judge as to quality; they are intended, ideally, to be viewed by laymen—those who know nothing of the inner workings of these arts—but the result of this is that people who have no idea of what's involved in the successful presentation of a magical or mental effect are asked to make intelligent judgments as to the quality of its performer.

It can't be done, and said contradiction results in some very peculiar views on the part of our audiences—often including even those within show business whom we would assume would know better. Some obvious views:

- If the performer does a trick and the viewer can't figure it out, the performer must be a good magician.
- If the performer makes the audience laugh a lot, the performer is a good magician.
- A magician who makes tigers vanish is better than a magician who makes people vanish, who in turn is better than a magician who makes cards or coins vanish.

These views are common; nonsensical, from our point of view, but common. In our field, as perhaps in no other area of show business, performers who are innocent not only of the technical basics of their craft but of stagecraft in general can have highly successful careers, and be regarded in highly favorable fashion by the general public.

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If a singer who couldn't remember some of the notes or words of a song, let alone sing the notes and dramatize the meaning of the lyric, were to attempt a professional career—that singer would be laughed off the stage. It is not at all unusual, however, to see magicians and mentalists of equal incompetence having long professional careers.

They *can* get away with it... so they *do* get away with it, and any intimations that they might not be serving the best interests of their art are met with the irrefutable argument that they're working...

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

...I suppose, in the greater scheme of things, that if one views magic or mentalism simply as a way of making money, there's nothing wrong with this—although the idea of someone going into show business as a way of making money is at best a strange one.

If, however, you view the mystery field as an art, as a vehicle to transport your audience into a world where the impossible and incredible and wonderful are made to happen, then the exploitative view leaves something to be desired.

Magic and mentalism are usually classified as novelty acts—and I've come up with a way to define a novelty act as opposed to a presentation aiming to create art. In novelty acts, the performers do what they do just to *prove they can do it*, to demonstrate a skill, gift or peculiarity.

In a theatrical art, the performer's talent and ability are givens—here that given talent is used to express or communicate an idea, a thought, an emotion.

In a good deal of the magic and nearly all of the mentalism I've seen performed, it wasn't *presented* so much as just *demonstrated*. The performer simply went through the sequence which would bring about the final result—and right up to the point of that result, when the effect was revealed, *nothing* of a theatrical or artistic nature was taking place. I don't mean it was bad—I mean it was nonexistent. The audience might as well have been at a psychology lab—or a science fair—or a toy store.

I should point out, at this juncture, that I am not considering novelty acts as basically inferior; far from it. Some such acts have been wonderful and awe-inspiring.

It's just that my training is in theatre; most of my stage experience is as an actor and director. Thus, I have always viewed magic and mentalism as—ideally—theatrical arts, which could communicate thoughts and feelings in a special and wonderful way.

Theatre exists within a framework of illusion; doesn't it make sense that the arts of illusion should find their home in it?

Let me try to make my point in another way by switching to films. In the past few years we have seen a number of multi-million-dollar productions, packed from first frame to last with spectacular visual effects, go right into the dumper—to the very great puzzlement of the executives. How could it happen? Didn't the *STAR WARS* films make big bucks because of their special effects?

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Nope.

STAR WARS was successful because it was, at base, a mythic fairy tale, a story that people have responded to for thousands of years. Now, the technical virtuosity of those film effects was critical to the success of the film in that they made the setting of the story believable; once the viewer had bought that premise, however, the effects faded into the background and the story took over.

FYNYS

It seems to me, in my perverse and doomed way, that magic and mental effects should be viewed just like the technology of special visual effects in film, i.e., a device or technique to affirm the reality of a dramatic premise.

In a way, goetic (or bizarre) magick of the kind dealt with in *Invocation* can be said to use effects in this way. The theatrical appeal has largely to do with the ritual created by the performer, or the story of the ancient artifact with which the audience is enchanted. The methodological technique used simply confirms the dramatic reality of what's going on, completes it—indeed, if the performance has been properly done the effect should not be surprising so much as inevitable.

On the evidence, in arguing for subjugating magical and mental technique to the needs of a theatrically dramatic premise I know I'm fighting a losing battle. Many will say, "Listen, I just do my effects and the audience enjoys it. Why isn't that enough?" On one level, at least, such an argument is unanswerable. Why indeed?

Simply because magic and mentalism can be more—much more—than they usually are...

...I have a vivid memory of seeing Torchy Towner perform at the Magic Castle. He did, among other things, a classical levitation performed as ritual magic. There was no hoop pass ("If I were really doing it I wouldn't have to prove it, would I?" he said to me) and there was no obvious playing to the audience as see-how-great-I-am. Quite the contrary: in doing the preliminary trance induction of the assistant, usually done as a throwaway, he took several minutes; in fact the routine itself took about eight minutes. What was the audience reaction?

They loved it. They loved it *because they believed it*; for those moments they were experiencing wonder, and they sat open-mouthed at the edges of their chairs. When the act was over many of them seemed to awaken as from a dream.

It can be done; magic and mentalism can be art—and once you've seen it done that way, it is very difficult to take seriously those who perform it just for the bucks, as puzzlery.

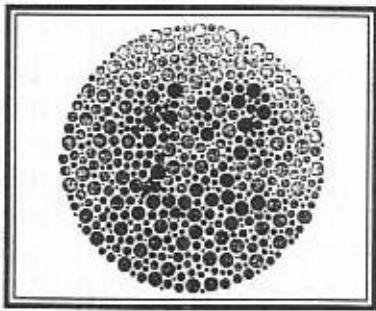
If you think this makes me sound elitist, I can only respond with the obvious: art isn't democratic—and it isn't supposed to be.

SUBLIMAGERY

This effect first appeared in the *New Phoenix*¹ nearly twenty-five years ago (1985). While the method is hardly unique, I think you will find the plot and presentation to have considerable interest for your audience.

EFFECT

You show a number of varicolored squares of cardboard; each is seen to contain a one- or two-digit number, both the number and its background consisting of dots of color. These are, you explain, called Ishihara plates, and are used in testing to determine color blindness.



composed of red dots on a background of green dots, and it was shown to a subject who was red-green color blind, he would obviously be unable to read the number; the plate would appear simply as a mass of darkish dots.

Now you show the first plate to the spectator and ask her to call out the number she sees. The spectator does so and you say that the actual number is written on the back of the plate. The spectator is given the cardboard plate and turns it over; on the back is a gummed label on which are written the words *Chromatic Acuity Ishihara Series—Protocol Target: _____*. A number has been written in the blank space and this number corresponds with the number showing on the front of the plate.

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¹No. 355; March 1961; page 247.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

The spectator, having normal color vision, is of course correct in naming the number on this and two subsequent trials; on the fourth (last) plate, however, she sees no number at all.

You explain that this plate, like the others, indeed bears a number, but that the plate is so designed that only a color-blind person can perceive the number—with, you add, *the conscious mind*. You continue: while the spectator has not in a conscious way perceived the number, it has registered on her subconscious mind.

To prove your point you request the spectator to close her eyes for a moment and to imagine a white surface. She is then to let two numbers appear on the surface, and when she sees them clearly, she is to open her eyes and name the number visualized.

She does so; let us say she calls out seventy-six.

When the final color plate is turned over it bears the number 76—and thus the experiment is successfully concluded.

Dept. of Psychology
Miskatonic University
Arkham, MA 02666

CHROMATIC ACUITY
ISHIHARA SERIES

PROTOCOL TARGET: 76

METHOD

This is simply a nail-writer, which at the proper moment fills in the number called out by the spectator. The numbers on the backs of the other three plates are written beforehand with a pencil matching the nail-writer.

The four plates required can be obtained expensively from a psychological supply house or cheaply by finding a used psychology text which contains colored reproductions. In this latter instance you will usually find four, of which three are readable by a person with normal vision and another which is not; it is this last one, of course, that is used for the fourth plate. Since the plates are on a round background, you might also orient this fourth plate so that the number is at right angles or even upside-down, lessening the chances that a person with exceptional color perception will be able to make it out.

The plates are cut out and mounted on cardboard; these are then laminated on both sides in clear matte-finish plastic. Self-adhesive labels, bearing the printed test protocol message, are put on the backs of the plates. If the plates are prepared in this way, you can peel off the label from the fourth plate after a performance and replace it with a fresh one—simpler and neater than trying to erase the writing.

You may find it effective to transpose the number called out by the spectator—e.g., she calls out forty-six, you write down (with the nail-writer) 64.

GLIMPRESSION

Many mentalists shy away from the use of clipboards, feeling that audiences may regard the board with suspicion. In fact, this is usually a misconception. In the same way that laypersons associate playing cards with card games—not tricks as some mentalists think—they associate clipboards with office work rather than chicanery.

Nevertheless, what follows is somewhat away from the usual run of such effects, and may be of interest even to those of you who generally don't use such a prop.

EFFECT

Picking up a paperback book, you riffle through it until a spectator calls stop; at that point you rip the page out of the book.

Clipping the page to a clear plastic clipboard, you hand it to the spectator along with a ball-point pen, asking him to circle at random any word on the page.

He does so; you instruct him to remove the page from the clipboard and to crumple the page into a small ball.

From your case you take a slate or markerboard; after you have had the spectator lightly touch the crumpled page to your forehead, you take a marker and write something on the board.

The spectator opens the sheet and reads off the circled word. When you turn your board around it is seen that you have, of course, written the same word.

METHOD

The page is, of course, forced, by trimming a sliver from the two pages in front of it to act in the same way as a short card.

At an art supply or photo store purchase an eight-by-ten-inch picture frame, the only proviso being that the clear covering piece be of plastic rather than glass. You will also need a bulldog clip and some rubber cement or double-stick tape.

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From a duplicate book, remove the force page and use the bulldog clip to fasten it to the plastic piece (taken from the frame).

In doing this, pick out a 'reference point' at the top of the page in relation to the clip. By this I mean—you put the page into the clip so that the two lower corners of the clip will exactly touch letters in two particular words... so that if you take out the page and put it back again, you could replace it in *exactly* the same position.

Having done this, place the clear clipboard (with the page on it) in the frame, and note the position of the page with relation to the cardboard backing of the frame. Now—*without moving the page*—slightly open the clip to free it and remove the clipboard from the frame, sliding it out from under the page. With a couple of dabs of rubber cement fasten the duplicate page, in the position it now occupies, to the cardboard backing.

This frame is in your case, along with a felt pad impregnated with powdered graphite.

The force page still bound in its book has its 'back'—i.e., the side that will be against the clipboard—lightly coated with wax.

In performance, you force the page with a timed riffle and remove it from the book. You secure it to the clipboard using your noted reference points so that it will be in precisely the same position as was the duplicate page earlier.

The spectator having circled a word and removed the page, you take back the clipboard and drop it into your case; in fact it goes *into the frame*, the purpose of which is to align it exactly as before.

As you address some comment to the spectator your hand takes the pad and wipes it across the board; graphite will adhere to the waxed circle impression. You do *not* look at it at this point, however; you remove the markerboard and go through the presentational by-play with the spectator—“visualize the word on this white surface...”—and apparently get an impression(!) of the word. Then, when you get a marker pen from the case, you look down and note the encircled word. Since both pages have occupied the same position, the circle impression will be directly over the chosen word.

NOTES

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The book page is only one way of using this, of course; you might have a printed form with items for the spectator to circle or check off. Another idea, which could generate some very interesting presentational aspects, would be to have a *map* of a city, in which you would seem to visualize traveling along a route marked out by your subject.

The major purpose of this description has been to show a way in which the performer working alone can use the principle—sometimes a bit of a problem with clipboards. It goes without saying that, given these presentations, an assistant can make life a lot simpler.

FYNYS

CREDITS

The problem of having a spectator simply mark something on a page resting on a clipboard was proposed by Dr. Jaks in OMAR'S PROPHECIES by J.G. Thompson; Hen Fetsch came up with a method for opaque clipboards². As previously noted, the riffle-page force owes something to Chan Canasta and to card-handling principles. The clear plastic clipboard was first marketed by Bob Nelson.

²See *Phoenix*, No. 238; Sept. 21, 1951; page 952.

SWINDOW

This is not an effect as such, but simply a presentational twist that can be added to a standard technique of mentalism.

Before your show, you approach the chairperson or entertainment director and exhibit an envelope which has been sent to you. Explaining that it contains a prophecy made at your request by a seer of your acquaintance, you have this person sign across the flap to prevent tampering.

Later—at some point during your show, you have a particular selection made; let's say it is a five-letter word.

You call the chairperson up on stage and explain that a prophecy was mailed by your mystical friend over a week ago, and that the chairperson has signed across the flap of the still-sealed envelope. Removing the envelope from your pocket, you have the chairperson confirm that the signature is there and the flap is still tightly stuck down.

You rip off one end of the envelope and ask the chairperson to remove the white card from within and read it aloud. It is an absolutely correct prophecy of the choice just made.

This really is so simple that I'm almost ashamed to describe it; almost—but not quite.

The card in the envelope is filled out with a prophecy in the usual fashion, a space being left blank to fill in the word; the only other point of note is that—rather than an index card—one cut from showcard or posterboard (and thus a bit thicker) is used.

You mail it to yourself, using the fake return address of your mythical seer.

Before the show—you approach the chairperson, explain the situation as described above, and have the envelope examined to see that it is securely sealed; then have the dignitary sign it across the flap.

FYNYS

Backstage, you use an X-acto™ knife or razor blade to cut a window in the face of the envelope to coincide with the blank space left in the prediction; this window should be no larger than absolutely necessary to do the job. This is the reason, incidentally, for the thick card; even if you're careful, the blade might cut through a thinner card.

(Note: to make this job easier, you might prepare a template—i.e., a card the same size as the envelope with a window where the blank space of your prediction will be; use this as a guide in cutting the window in the envelope. Also make sure that the card you use fills the envelope completely, so that it can't shift position. If it did you could jiggle it back into position, but why worry?)

Of course you fill out the prediction with a nail-writer in the usual way—but there's a bit more to it.

Note that you have the chairperson confirm the examination and signing of the envelope; you also make mention of it being mailed, and the whole reason for this aspect of the effect is that many in the audience will assume that the prophecy was mailed *to the chairperson*.

You have filled out the blank space as you talk with your helper. You now have the chairperson confirm that the signature is correct and that the envelope is still sealed *while you hold it*; then quickly rip open the envelope and have the prediction taken out and read. That's all there is to it.

CUE-BIC

In an early *Pentagram*³ Leslie May described an effect called *Double-Deletion*, in which the mentalist showed two identical lists of eight objects—written in pencil—and asked a spectator to choose one of the listed items. This selection was then *erased* by the mentalist from one list, which the spectator then pocketed.

The medium, out of the room until now, was brought in and given the other list to study for a moment. After a bit of concentration she then erased *the same word!*

May's method used a cubical artgum eraser; it was a *new* eraser, and the object (actually its position on the list) was cued by which of the eight corners of the eraser was used to do the erasing on the first list.

Without changing May's excellent effect or method at all—I'd simply like to point out how the list of possible objects can be extended to *twenty-six* items.

In addition to the eight corners used by May, a cube also possesses *twelve edges* and *six faces*. $8 + 12 + 6 = 26$. Using the face stamped with the brand name as a reference point you assign values from one to sixteen for the corners, edges and faces in turn.

A brand new eraser must be used each time (the one I have before me now is General's Kimberley Gum Cleaner No. 137). In the case of the faces, the medium will not likely be able to notice any wear, or rubbing away of particles, as she does with the edges and corners—so here she looks for the face that is a bit lighter in color.

In 'putting in the work' you can, of course, erase so as to leave as strong or subtle an indication as you wish.

³Vol. 5, No. 12; Sept. 1951; page 91.

FYNYS

Note that in the May routine there is some focus on the erasing procedure; it is, indeed, the action duplicated by the medium. Obviously the technique could be disguised—in writing down a spectator's choice you could make an apparent mistake, correcting it with the eraser. In this latter scenario I think it might be a bit odd to have the eraser taken along with the pencil and paper *to* the medium; this would play much more legitimately if it was part of a presentation where you would leave the room and then the medium would return.

Having twenty-six possibilities means that a list of the Greater Arcana of the Tarot could be used—as, indeed, could a listing of the letters of the alphabet or the twenty-six drawings from a Mental Pictoria deck. Yet another approach would be birthsign and the month (e.g., April in Aries). By having a man or woman retrieve the medium you could extend the signals to fifty-two, and thus code any card in the deck.

In the interests of completeness I should point out that if you assigned *binary* values (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, etc.) for all twenty-six cues, and used them in combination, you could make a list of 67,108,864 items!

Of course...you'd need a truck to carry it.

DECIVISION

This is a very simple but convincing and effective method for doing a question-answering routine. It is decidedly *not* for the faint-hearted.

On the other hand, it isn't as blatant as it may appear at first reading; given a strong presentation, it will produce the aura of a genuine exhibition of psychic abilities.

EFFECT

From an ordinary letter envelope you extract ten index cards and distribute them to members of the audience.

After questions have been written by the spectators, the cards are collected into a face-down stack and replaced in the envelope you still hold.

Setting the envelope down for a moment, you take out your pocket handkerchief and blindfold yourself. This done, you pick up the envelope again and from it extract a card.

You hold it against your forehead; it is clearly evident that, even if you could see through your blindfold in some way, you'd still have to have eyes in the top of your head to see the writing.

You answer the question and identify the questioner; she verifies the correctness of your answer and the card is handed back to her.

You proceed through the rest of the questions in like manner—if you wish, answering the last question before it is even taken from the envelope.

METHOD

The properties used here are as indicated; a letter-size envelope, ten index cards and a handkerchief. The only preparation is to mark the index cards in a one-to-ten order—scratching out or

FYNYS

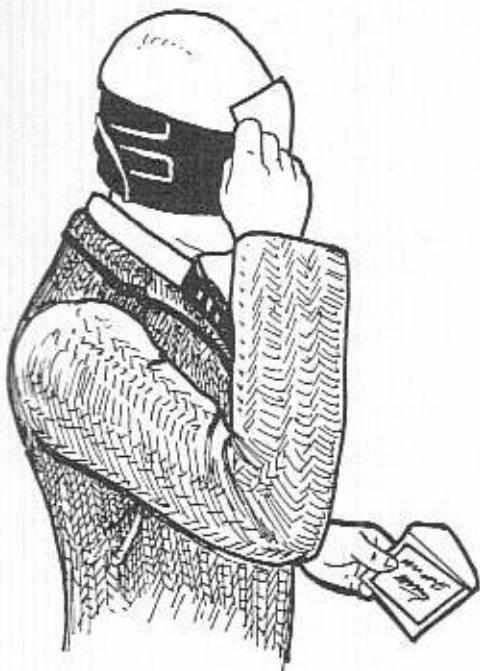
thickening a blue line, placing a pencil dot, whatever you like—and this explains how you know whose question is whose.

When the questions have been written and collected into a face-down stack by a spectator, you extend the envelope, flap open and address (face) side *up*. You may lift the flap a bit with your other hand to assist the spectator in placing the stack within the envelope.

You then fold down the flap and set the envelope aside for a moment.

With your handkerchief you make a blindfold and tie it on; nothing unusual here, but you make sure you have clear *downward* vision.

Picking up the envelope (after feeling around for it just a bit), you turn it flap side toward you and open the flap; you reach in and apparently extract one card.



Actually you take *two* cards squared as one; you rest these for a moment on the outside of the envelope—long enough to read whatever's on the one facing you—and then lift it and hold it to your forehead. While going through this action you have of course been talking about what you are going to attempt and presumably have kept the audience misdirected as well as entertained.

While you answer the question glimpsed you have all the time in the world to read the one being held behind the envelope at waist level.

You identify the questioner and hand the question card just held at your forehead back to her.

Now—you reach into the envelope take out another question card, and immediately place it against your forehead. You answer the question on the card still held behind the envelope; as you identify the questioner and ask if your answer is correct, your hand comes down and rests the question card for a moment on your other hand, i.e., behind the envelope. Of course you leave that question behind the envelope and take away the one previously concealed there.

Since all eyes are on the questioner as he or she responds to your query, there's no problem with misdirection; besides, you have *already* answered the question, so no one is looking for chicanery at this point.

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If you answer all the questions, your final situation will be an empty envelope with a card behind it; you hold them both to your forehead, go through the divination as usual, and then simply pretend to extract the card from the envelope.

CREDITS

The switching of a question card behind an envelope, though not used in this way, was a feature of the Hewitt-Annemann *Modern Mindreader* routine⁴. Marked cards for the writing of the spectators was used, as has been mentioned before, by L. Vosburgh Lyons in his *Graphology* effect which appeared in *The Jinx*⁵.

⁴ANNEMANN'S MENTAL BARGAIN EFFECTS, page 2.

⁵No. 74; Jan. 6, 1940; page 493.

OManation

What follows will only make sense if you are familiar with the OM Billet Switching Box as described by Otis Manning in *The Jinx*⁶ and later in ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS⁷. If you're not sure you remember it go check the reference. I'll wait.

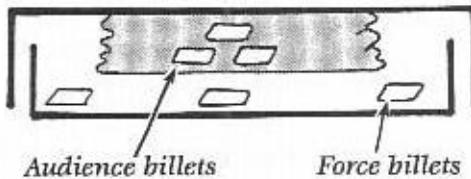
Back so soon?

As you will now have noted, Manning's box was a very simple and serviceable way of switching billets in an apparently innocent manner, and quite a number of mentalists, including myself, have made use of it.

This entry began with a conversation with Bob Koch, who'd had the extremely clever idea of using an ungaffed box to pass out the papers and pencils—the gaffed one being switched in for collection later on.

After I thought about this for a while, I realized there was a way to make the gaffed box so it could quite safely be used for the distribution of the papers and pencils, and then immediately be used for the collection.

The original OM Box used a smaller box beneath the slot in the lid to catch the billets. Here we alter that slightly—and instead we use a thin cloth bag with a cardboard bottom, which can be easily made with a swatch of cloth, a piece of cardboard and a stapler. (Note: the *inside* surface of the cardboard piece must match in color and design the *outside* bottom of the box proper, and this should be reasonably noticeable and distinctive.)



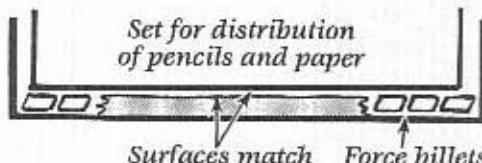
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⁶No. 137; May 1941; page 781.

⁷Page 26.

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The lid thus prepared, you turn it 'mouth up' and put in your dummy billets, spreading them around as evenly as possible but not atop the cardboard bottom of the bag.



This done, you nest the bottom of the box in the upper half, also, of course, mouth up. Because the bag affixed to the lid is collapsible it takes up little space and the box will nest neatly in the lid—which also conceals the dummy billets between lid and box.

Note too that, should someone look in the slot on the lid, now on the underside of the nested box parts, they will assume that what they see is the bottom of the box proper, since we have employed the principle of masking *à la Chinatown Quarter* here.

The pads and pencils are put in the box and it may be safely passed around to distribute these items.

Getting it back, you pull the box up out of the lid and bring the lid around to the front, up and then down onto the box proper. The dummies spill unseen into the box, the bag drops into position to take the questions, and you're all set.

(The loading action is much the same as that used in *Boxcards* on page 656.)

You might wish to snap a rubber band or two around the box to hold it closed, but if it's a good fit this really won't be necessary.

As to what you might do with the box, aside from the usual switching of questions—Milbourne Christopher had a really excellent use of this box to predict the results of a 'straw poll' election held by your audience; you'll find it in his column in *Hugard's Magic Monthly* for August 1952⁸.

⁸Vol. X, No. 3; page 967.

ZODIACCOUNT

This is not a full-fledged effect, though I'll provide such details as are necessary to make it so. Rather, it is simply an approach to a book test—using a specific book—which is a bit out of the usual run.

You show a copy of Linda Goodman's *LOVE SIGNS*, a largish book dealing with the astrology of compatibility. Inviting a man and woman to take part, you have the two of them provide numbers to reach a total.

At this point you inquire as to the astrological sign of each; the man is a *Pisces*, and the woman, a *Scorpio*.

You tell them to turn to the page in *LOVE SIGNS* indicated by the total of their two numbers; they do so—and find that it is a compatibility reading for a *Pisces Man* and a *Scorpio Woman*!

Given this premise, I am sure you can work out various ways of getting to the denouement. Obviously you must learn the signs of the two people you will be calling on to assist. This can be done earlier in the show in the course of another effect—a question-answering routine, for example, where the slips given to these two spectators differ from the rest in requesting birthdate.

It is perhaps better to get the information prior to the show, since it greatly simplifies preparation. Here also it can be ostensibly for a QA routine to be done in the show—or it can be part of a torn-center routine in which this as well as other information is written, but the birthdate information is not put to use right then.

Having determined the birthsigns and determined the page number to be forced (in *LOVE SIGNS* there is a reading for every male-female astrological combination), it remains only to force that page number by some means or other.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

This can be as simple as an *Add-A-Number*, totaled by another member of the audience, and there are many other ways.

Two methods I can recommend are *Adamsmyth* (page 300) and *Janussum* (page 489). Either of these will serve the purpose, though for presentational reasons I'd give the nod to the first-named.



NOTE 1993: A very simple way of accomplishing this effect involves the use of a deck of cards; on the two Jokers you have attached a cue-list giving you the page numbers for each combination.

The assisting couple having been seated, you ask her and him their zodiac signs. You show the book and explain that the accuracy of one divination system can be tested by using another—in this case—you show the deck of cards—Cartomancy.

As you remove the cards from the case you note the required page number from the cue-list, and then cut the cue-cards to the back of the deck. You spread the cards as you talk about divination, and cull the required two or three cards (those with the values to make up the page number, e.g., if the page is 243 you cull a Two, a Four and a Three) to the top of the deck.

In only a few cases will there be only two cards needed; the rest of the time you have the lady and gentleman each select one, and then so do you—apparently by random chance, but actually, of course, giving yourself the required third card. I might use a timed riffle-drop of the cards for all three; alternatively, I might employ a Vernon BDV switch as described on page 34.

You show the cards and read off the values, giving a very brief reading for their selections—the assisting spectators turn to that page and discover that the cards and the zodiac do indeed tell all.

I am assuming that you are familiar with numerous ways to execute the required forces in innocent fashion; if you aren't—you shouldn't be reading this book.

SYNWITCH

Yet another item which is primarily a presentational notion, this is a direct adaptation of an effect of Leslie May's entitled *It's On The Cards* which appeared in *Pentagram*⁹.

The May effect required a particular kind of souvenir deck of *extremely limited availability in the British Isles, and not at all outside that area*. I've adapted it to the popular and easily obtainable Gypsy Witch Fortune Telling Cards.

In the primary version of the routine, you have someone think of a card and make a note of it on a slip of paper.

Showing a bowl filled with folded pieces of index card, you have one selected and put on display in a bulldog clip.

Finally, you remove the Gypsy Witch deck from its case, show it and have a card chosen under very fair conditions.

You have pointed out that each card of the Gypsy Witch deck bears a fortune message. Now you have the selector of the card call out the name of the card and read the message of fate.

The first spectator announces his thought-of card; it is the card just named!

The second spectator removes the folded slip from the clip and reads it; it is identical with the fortune message on the card!

Anyone may look at the rest of the slips; they are, of course, all different.

The method can be very briefly explained, as I will assume the reader's knowledge of the component parts.

The Gypsy Witch deck goes into a Mental Masterpiece impression case. This is how you learn the card thought of—after the writing has been done you extract the deck partway from the case, and then remember that the slip has to be chosen

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

first—but in that moment you have glimpsed the impression on the gimmick in the case.

In your pockets are two billet indexes; instead of having the names of cards on the slips, however, each bears the message to be found on that card in the Gypsy Witch deck.

Having learned the identity of the card, you obtain the correct billet (here, rather than paper, I advise the use of a thin card stock); in placing the billet chosen by the spectator into the clip you switch it for the one you hold.

You remove the cards from the case, and the billet you hold is disposed of along with the case. As you show the faces of the cards and explain a bit of their purpose, you spot the named card and bring it to the top with a casual cut or two. It then only remains to execute your best force on the third spectator, and bring the effect to a conclusion.

In a variation on the primary version—those of you who are familiar with Phil Goldstein's excellent *Four-Sided Triangle* from his RED BOOK OF MENTALISM¹⁰ will see how it can be applied here, i.e., a spectator thinks of a card before the show; since you know what this card is, it eliminates the need for indexes or the impression device, and the necessary card can be at the top of the deck at the outset. Phil suggests an additional line here when dealing with the first spectator (he of the pre-show selection): during the performance you show the Gypsy Witch deck to him and ask if he has ever seen such a deck. He will most probably answer *No*, and this will subtly suggest to the audience that in the pre-show selection *no* deck was involved.

¹⁰Page 5.

PAGENCY

Here, again, we take a technique that has been kicking around for quite a while and use it to produce a very impressive effect.

EFFECT

You show two or three paperback books and a large dictionary. The dictionary is handed to a spectator to hold, and one of the books is chosen by another spectator.

Going to a few people, you riffle the upper outer corner of the book and have each of them stop you at any time and note the first word at the top of the selected page.

You have any of the spectators call out his or her selected word; the word is, for example, *happy*. You instantly say, "Page 324—second column—it's the third word listed, down from the top of the page."

The spectator with the dictionary finds the location given; you are, of course, precisely correct.

METHOD

As I said, it's an old principle, building on concepts by Paul Curry, Orville Meyer and Danny Tong.

It also is a great deal of work to prepare—though once this is done the effect itself is near-automatic—but who ever told you mentalism was easy?

Basically it is this: at the upper right corner of each right-hand page in the three books, you note the dictionary locations (*page-column-position* from *bottom* or *top* of column, whichever's shorter) for the words at the left-top of the facing left-hand page.

Thus, when the spectator peeks at a word, you are looking at the information that will locate that word in the dictionary held by the other spectator.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

If you have two or three spectators look at words—and here a couple of repetitions will increase the effect—you should memorize each location as glimpsed. If you can't depend on straight memory to do this for you, you might use mnemonics; in the case given, 324 would translate to MiNeR, an easy association—if you remember Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs—particularly *Happy!*

It should be noted that, if you use mnemonics, the mnemonic cue itself can be written instead of the number coordinates.

Here we've taken a classic method of a book test and used it for a super-memory demonstration; while it may seem to be a lesser effect, there are many situations where they'll believe you have really memorized the dictionary when they wouldn't ever 'buy' the standard presentation.

CREDITS

As given in text. Dr. Franklin V. Taylor was the inventor of the *Peek Deck*¹¹ on which many of these later methods were based; it should also be noted that Paul Curry¹² was the first to apply the principle to a book test.

¹¹See *Phoenix*, No. 25; Dec. 25, 1942; page 103.

¹²*Phoenix*, No. 53; Feb. 4, 1944; page 216.

CUTOUT

Here is a combination of two ideas to create some interesting mentalism with cards.

EFFECT

Having shuffled the deck you hand it to a spectator and instruct her to cut off a packet which may be as large or as small as she likes; to make things interesting, you add, she should take at least a dozen cards. She does so.

You instruct her to note the card she has cut to—i.e., the bottom card of her packet. When she has done this she is asked to hand the packet to another person who is to shuffle it—note the new bottom card—shuffle the packet again—and hand it back to you.

You have the spectators concentrate and—with a little by-play—you find the two thought-of cards.

METHOD

The deck is stacked in a prearranged order and your shuffle is, of course, false.

The two selections are made as indicated above; you get the packet back and begin to look through it. Actually you are counting the cards, and from this you learn the card chosen by the first spectator; since her card was the bottom one of the stacked packet, if there are seventeen cards it is obviously the seventeenth card in your memorized stack.

Let's say the first spectator's card is the Two of Diamonds, and that of the second spectator (which as yet you don't know) is the Nine of Clubs.

You turn to the *second* spectator and ask him to think of his card. After a moment you say: "It's a red card." (Here what you will be doing is naming the characteristics of the card you *do* know.)

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

The second spectator denies this. You are surprised, and say you get a distinct impression of a diamond. Turning for a moment to the first spectator, you ask if *she* is thinking of a diamond. She confirms that this is true—and you ask her to stop concentrating on her card for a moment.

Going back to the second spectator, you say he's thinking of a low-value card; he says no—and glancing back at the first spectator you ruefully observe that hers must be a low-value card; this is confirmed.

You may continue with odd or even, depending on the situation; most often, however, after one or two 'misdirected' divinations you will, based on the cards you hold, have eliminated down to the second spectator's card, which you reveal.

Since you've known the first spectator's card all along, it is no problem to conclude with the revelation of this selection.

NOTE

If you play this in a light, pleasant way, as a humorous situation, the spectators will assume the 'mistakes' are a part of the presentation and will not associate them at all with the method. Since in any case you couldn't know the first spectator's card, it won't seem feasible that you could use it as a reference point for the second selection. It is on that notion—and your acting—that this effect rests.

(NOTE 1993: After the second spectator has made his selection and shuffled the packet, you may optionally allow him to cut the deck, put the packet on the lower half and replace the cut-off portion; he can then give the deck several straight cuts. At this point you may false shuffle. On looking through the cards you will see a point where a group of mixed cards interrupts the stack. This is, of course, the shuffled packet; you count this group and continue as usual. It now seems as though you are finding the two thought-of cards from amongst the whole deck rather than a packet, and you may find this enhancement of the effect to be worth the very slight additional trouble.)

CREDITS

744 | The cut-off packet from a stack location is Ed Marlo's *A Miracle With Cards* and appeared in *Ibidem* No. 8¹³; Paul Marcus used the 'two-choice' idea in a pump sequence to insure a positive response in his *Across The Void* which appeared in Corinda's *THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM*¹⁴.

¹³Page 11.

¹⁴Page 327.

PHOLDER

This stage and platform effect is more amusing than mysterious, and is hardly intended for the performer who comes on very strong or plays it 'heavy'. For the right performer in the right situation it can be a funny and effective opening piece.

EFFECT

You show a closed manila folder, of the kind used in filing. On the front of this folder, in bold lettering, you have listed the names of five attractive celebrities—let us say they are...

CATHERINE DENEUVE SHARON STONE
MICHELLE PFEIFFER THERESA RUSSELL
LINDA EVANS

Asking a gentleman to take part, you explain to him that at considerable difficulty you have been able to obtain a candid photograph of one of these ladies...and in this particular photograph...she isn't wearing anything. You attempt to project the name to the spectator—and he names one of the five ladies listed.

You reel back in surprise. *"That's amazing! You're absolutely right! And here's the picture to prove it..."*

You take the photograph out of the folder, and indeed its blonde subject is wearing nothing. It's a bit difficult to tell much more...since the subject is only three months old...

...you let the now empty folder drop open; inside, in very large letters, are the words: WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

After the laugh you set the folder aside, and continue to insist that this is the named star—but the spectator is skeptical, as is the rest of the audience.

In that case, you say, it's a good thing that you have something a bit more current; you turn the picture around and there, on the other side, is a current photograph of the named actress.

METHOD

The five double-sided photographs are in a pocket at the rear of the folder; this pocket is easily made by cutting one end off a large mailing envelope and gluing it to the rear of the folder.

Each of the photographs has a projecting tab made from a folded-over piece of cloth tape. Each tab is positioned so it will be directly in line with the name of the appropriate star written on the front of the folder. (This 'tab' idea is from my *Pentab*, page 647.)

Thus—when the spectator names his choice you point to it with your forefinger. Your thumb automatically rests on the tab of the appropriate photograph, and it is thus a simple matter to extract the picture, apparently from the folder itself but actually from the rear pocket.

You wait a beat and then let the folder fall open to show the gag message. Aside from the laugh itself, this bit makes it seem that the gag was the primary purpose of the folder; now that the gag is done, it's logical to set the folder aside.

Thus you are left clean, and can finish the effect with nothing to worry about but the presentation.

(NOTE 1993: Female performers can easily alter the presentation to feature male stars—MEL GIBSON, TOM CRUISE, *et al.* It should be noted that some might wonder about this version of the effect, holding the view that women do not share men's interest in looking at nude pictures of the opposite sex; these days, as far as I can tell, that view has no basis in fact.)



FYNYS

CREDITS

This is based on Bob Cassidy's *Presidential Portrait* in his PSEUDO-MENTALLY YOURS¹⁵; he in turn credits Robbins' ESP Photo Miracle for the inspiration. Here I've attempted to provide a somewhat more subtle method, and changed the theme in accordance with my theory that successful and beautiful women are of more interest than politicians...

¹⁵Page 7.

KINESLATE

Like the just-described *Pholder*, the effect which follows is intended as a light and humorous piece. I will go out on a limb here, however, and say that done in the right situation...and given the proper presentation...this could get the strongest audience reaction of anything you do.

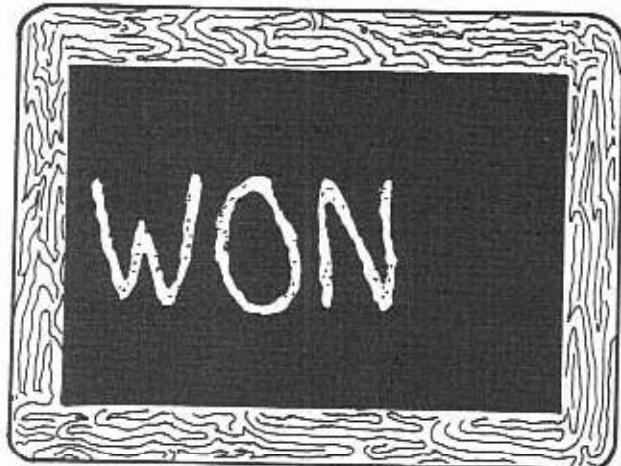
EFFECT

You have a spectator call stop as you riffle the pages of a book; she notes the first word on the page.

Picking up a slate, you say that you will attempt to divine her thought. After a few moments you appear to scribble something on the slate; you ask the spectator to call her word aloud.

She does so and you triumphantly turn the slate around; it appears to be the same word the spectator called out, and so of course the audience applauds. As you smugly take your bow you glance at the spectator, who seems dissatisfied.

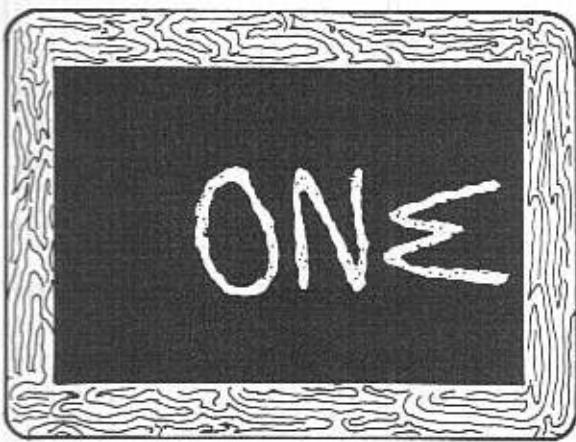
Is something, you innocently inquire, wrong?



FYNYS

The spectator tells you it's the wrong word. You look at the slate with a puzzled expression, then back at her. "But you said WON, didn't you? And that's what I've written here..."

After a bit of by-play (not too much) it is determined that in fact the spectator thought of the word ONE.



You appear to be taken down a peg. "And I thought I was doing so well," you sigh. "Hmm..."

As you look at the slate the W in WON seems to quiver a bit, and then it definitely begins to move. It slowly crawls up the slate and across, above the other two letters, and then moves back down into line—but now it lies on its side to form a letter E... thus spelling the word correctly.

METHOD

You'll hardly need to learn that the word ONE is forced; you find a book where it appears at the first position on the left-hand page and force it as per usual with a riffle.

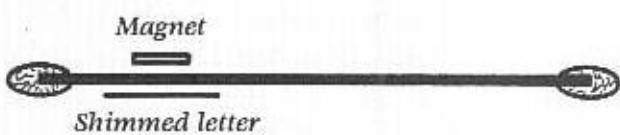
The slate is actually a slate frame around a piece of artist's thick showcard; this card has been covered with black construction paper. On this you have written the O and N in white chalk and sprayed with fixative.



The W is drawn on another piece of construction paper, just large enough for it, and this piece is glued to a similar piece with a metal shim between the layers.

Your only other requirement is a strong flat magnet; this, too, should be covered (on one side at least) with construction paper.

At the outset the W is positioned on the slate to spell out the word WON, the magnet holding it in position from the other side of the slate. The slate is on your table, magnet side up; when you pick up the slate your hand reaches across and grasps it by the far edge so that when it is brought up into writing position the magnet will be concealed by your arm.



The writing is, of course, only simulated.

After you have shown the word and the by-play with the spectator has been

gone through, it is a simple matter to have one hand go behind the slate while the other holds the slate by one edge.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

The magnet is moved behind the slate to bring the W up and over and down into its final position, and thus the effect is concluded.

NOTES

In making the movement you should not let the W go directly across the other letters—since ideally you want to give the impression that the *letter* is moving, not a piece of card with the letter written on it.

A slightly more elaborate version of this would use a fake hand taken from the pocket and clipped to one end of the slate at the appropriate time—but I don't think it is really at all necessary. Other thoughts, also a bit Byzantine, would involve having an assistant hold the slate, or having the slate on a large easel behind which was a secret assistant.

CREDITS

The basic homonymic-mistake idea was the invention of Stanley Collins, who used it in conjunction with his Transcendental Book Test (which forced the word *one*), as was the basic E-gag, done with letter-cards; here I have attempted to make the gag into something more visual and with a mystery element. I may also have been inspired to some degree by the moving-pip card.

TRINITIAL

Here is a very direct thought-projection routine using three spectators who never have to leave their seats.

EFFECT

Showing three three-by-five-inch pay envelopes, you mention that each contains some information which you will attempt to project into the minds of persons in your audience.

Pointing to a spectator, you ask him to name *any* two-digit number; he does so. You mark the envelope with his initials and set it aside.

As quickly, you repeat this process with the other two spectators and the two remaining envelopes.

Gathering the envelopes together, you ask the first spectator to remind the audience of his selection. He does so and, locating his envelope from the three, you open it; the card taken from inside shows the number just named! This astonishing result is repeated with the other two spectators.

METHOD

For all its directness and strength, this effect is brought about very simply. You must know the initials of the three spectators you will be working with. Prior to the show, these initials are written on the faces of the envelopes; then, into each envelope goes a *blank* white card. To the inner side of the face of the envelope is affixed (with doublestick tape) a piece of carbon paper. The envelope is then closed and the clasp is secured on the flap.

The pen you use is actually a dummy; it does not write at all, but in the course of the effect acts as a stylus.

In performance, you remove the envelopes from your pocket, being careful not to show the initialed faces. Going to the first spectator, you have him name a number.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

This done, you ask for his initials; he gives them and you apparently write them on the face of the envelope; in fact you use the stylus to write the two-digit number. As soon as this is done you set the envelope to one side, initials facing outward. It appears that everything has been done very fairly.

You repeat the process with the other two spectators. It then remains only to gather the envelopes together—ask for the initials of each spectator in turn, locate the corresponding envelope, open it and reveal the predictions as described.

NOTE

Do *not* do this with just one envelope—three is the minimum—since the whole idea of the initials is to keep track of which envelope is which; otherwise there's no excuse for them.

CREDITS

The impression envelope goes back to the turn of the century; this application is inspired by my own *Doublet* (page 303). I am told that Ned Rutledge's *Dice Telekinesis* (which I have not seen) uses a similar principle.

QUINTASTIC

As the final item in this section, I will describe a card effect—but I think you will agree that it is just a little bit out of the ordinary.

EFFECT

You shuffle a deck of cards and hand it to a spectator to cut; this done, he is to take off the top card and place it in his breast pocket. The next card goes into his left jacket pocket; the third card into the right jacket pocket; the fourth and fifth into the left and right trouser pockets respectively.

The rest of the cards are set aside.

You reveal that before the show you went through exactly the same actions as those just done by the spectator. From your breast pocket you take a card; it is the Six of Hearts. At your instruction the spectator removes the card from his breast pocket and it, too, is a Six of Hearts.

In like manner you remove the cards from your other pockets—and in each case, when the spectator removes his card from his pocket, it is seen to match precisely.

METHOD

Again, here we have a strong and visual effect, the method for which can be explained in a very few lines.

The deck, which you false shuffle, consists of ten banks of the same five cards in the same order in each bank.

Thus when the spectator has finished putting the cards in his pockets and you set the deck aside, a glimpse of the bottom card of the pack tells you where he started and thus what card is in which pocket.

In each of *your* pockets is a simple five-card pocket index; you need not, really, use an index at all, but it may make the operation a bit more graceful.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

Knowing which card is in each of the spectator's pockets, you simply remove the appropriate card from your pocket first.

That, really, is all there is to it.

NOTES

I should say that for this effect I use a *five-bank* deck; ten cards repeated five times. (In fact this is the same deck used in my *Trionic* routine, page 69.) The indexes, of course, are expanded to hold the ten possible cards.

This concept was originally formulated for use with ESP cards in a Quantimental stand, the spectator removing the cards from the stand one at a time and placing them in specified pockets—but that version seemed a bit over-elaborate.

CREDITS

The multiple-bank deck should be credited to Edward Bagshawe.¹⁶

¹⁶See his EXCLUSIVE PROBLEMS IN MAGIC, page 42.

CROSS-REFERENCE

Decivision: see *Burning Questions*—page 20

Zodiaccount: see *MINDSCRIPT 1: The Book Test*—page 349

Pholder: see *Pentab*—page 647

Trinitial: see *Doublet*—page 303

T.A.R.O.T.

[1987]

"I think you're a very bad man," said Dorothy.
"Oh, no, my dear; I'm a very good man;
I'm just a very bad wizard."

—L. Frank Baum, THE WIZARD OF OZ

DEDICATION

To those who seek the truth behind the fantasy,
and who realize that even make-believe wizards can
often provide real help to those who seek it.

HEREIN WILL BE found a number of items using the Tarot deck, so it is probably appropriate to begin by discussing what *kind* of Tarot deck is used. There are many different decks available, as a look through the U.S. Games Systems catalog will show; in what follows, however, we will assume the standard Rider-Waite deck is used. While this deck is not the best on either a technical or aesthetic level, it is by far the best-known and most recognizable—and therefore to most querents it is (ironically) the most 'authentic'!

The material here runs the gamut from out-and-out chicanery to new techniques and systems for Tarot reading, as well as some technical data.

First, however, a word about Tarot work in general:

You may not necessarily accept the divinatory properties of the Tarot deck; be that as it may, if you are to present Tarot work in anything approaching a convincing manner you are going to have to learn about the cards—not just supposed individual meanings, but also the history and symbolism involved.

Why?

Imagine, if you will, an actor who would attempt to portray a pilot without learning something of the basics of flying and the cockpit controls. It is highly likely that he would appear unconvincing at best and ridiculous at worst, *even to those who know nothing about planes*. If this is true in the 'set piece' of an acting scene, think how much *more* true it will be of a situation in which there is interaction—i.e., between you and the querent.

This is not to say that a good extemporaneous speaker can't get by with just a thin veneer of knowledge on a subject. I am, however, assuming that you aspire to more than just 'getting by'; that's one of the reasons for the *Bibliographical Information* page at the end of this section.

One other point, which I have previously touched on in *OMNIMANCY*:

Tarot cards set up expectations in the minds of most people—expectations of a mystical experience in which the querent or spectator learns what the cards indicate of future events. To bring out such a deck and then do what is patently a card trick is to upset these expectations in a negative way; quite frankly, most people would rather have their fortunes told than see a card trick.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

This does not necessarily mean that Tarot decks must only be used for readings, and cannot effectively be employed in other areas of mentalism and mental magic. Many examples of their use in mentalism effects will, in fact, be found in these pages.

You, however, are the only judge of what you can present in a convincing and effective way, and I will leave it to you to make that determination concerning the material herein. I will only say that whatever is done must have a feel more mystical than magical, more of the mind than legerdemain.

READS

In this subsection a number of methods for secretly gaining knowledge of a querent's thought or question will be described. It should be noted, however, that these are comforting in difficult situations, but are by no means required. Most books on Tarot divination instruct you to *ask* the spectator the question—and those that do not (Crowley's *BOOK OF THOTH*, for example) generally have a system to determine whether your divination technique is valid.

However, there *are* times when it will be helpful to have means of gaining solid information. For those times, the following methods are provided.

STUCKUP

It is traditional for the Tarot deck to be wrapped in a cloth when not in use; we take advantage of that tradition for this and the following method.

For this first method, only two bits of preparation are required; the first is to trim the blank-faced Tarot card (which will be used for the writing of the question) so that it is *slightly* narrow. A blob of magician's wax (or any good beeswax) is placed at the center of the cloth, which is then lightly wrapped around the deck.

The deck is taken from the cloth, which is set aside for the moment (remember which side of the cloth has the wax ball). From the deck you remove the blank card, and ask the querent to write a word or phrase which will fix his question firmly in mind.¹

When that has been done, the querent is instructed to push the question card face down into the face-down deck, which he then cuts several times. You pick up the cloth with one hand—wax side toward you—and the deck with the other. As you bring the cloth in front of the deck, you execute a Charlier (one-handed) cut with the deck (a bit more difficult than with a regular deck, but mastered in an hour's practice, if necessary). Because the question card was trimmed narrow, the deck will break at this point and it will thus end up on top.

The cloth is placed over the cards and you pause for a moment—as you do so, press the wax ball against the question card. You take the deck from beneath the cloth and push off the top three cards to the table in a one-handed deal. As you are doing this you note the question, which will be stuck to the cloth with its face toward you.

¹This 'word or phrase' concept is George Anderson's from his *IT MUST BE MINDREADING*, page 5.

T.A.R.O.T.

(Two points: first, the cloth should be reasonably heavy, so that (a) the card cannot be seen through it and it (b) drapes correctly—second, you hold it along the middle of one edge by as much of that edge as you can grasp, rather than by a single spot—in other words, it should hang in roughly a long rectangle rather than a diamond shape.)

(If these points are adhered to, along with just a bit of attention to angles and lighting, there should be no possibility of the querent sighting the card.)

You briefly mention that these cards (the three dealt) will represent past, present and future. You wrap the deck up in the cloth, returning the question card to the top, and set the wrapped deck to one side.

Now, with knowledge of the question, you are able to give an excellent and meaningful reading from the triad of cards.

NOTES

With this and other methods, the querent's writing may be wrong side up from your point of view when you make your glimpse. For this reason it is advisable to instruct the spectator to *print* the word or phrase—*...as though you were looking at it on a sign or billboard, so that it will be vivid in your mental picture...*

As an alternative to magician's wax or beeswax, you may wish to experiment with the stickum putty sold by office supply stores under a variety of names; used for temporary posting of papers and notes to walls, this putty may in some cases be preferable to the wax.

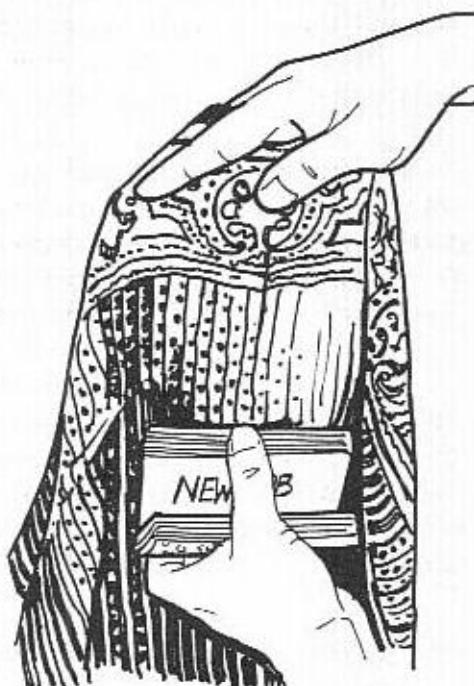


COVERUP

This method also uses the cloth, which in this case needs no preparation. However, one of the regular Tarot cards (*not* the blank) is trimmed slightly narrow.

As before, a question is written on the blank card; it is replaced above the narrow card—either by having the narrow card on top to begin with, or simply cutting to it. The deck is cut by the querent, burying the question card somewhere in the middle.

At this point the three top cards are dealt for the reading. You then pick up the cloth and begin to cover the deck. As you do so, you allow the deck (screened from the querent by the cloth) to fall open as though you were going to do a Charlier cut; because of the narrow card, it breaks so that the question card is visible at the face of the upper half. You note the question and allow the deck to close as you continue the wrapping procedure. You may wish to have the querent mix the three cards on the table to divert attention at this juncture.



T.A.R.O.T.

Again, you know the question, and thus may proceed with the reading.

There may be a few situations when you simply cannot read the writing in a short glimpse; in these cases you *complete* the Charlier cut and wrap the deck—but you wrap it as per the old coin fold, so the deck actually ends up outside the cloth while still apparently wrapped.²

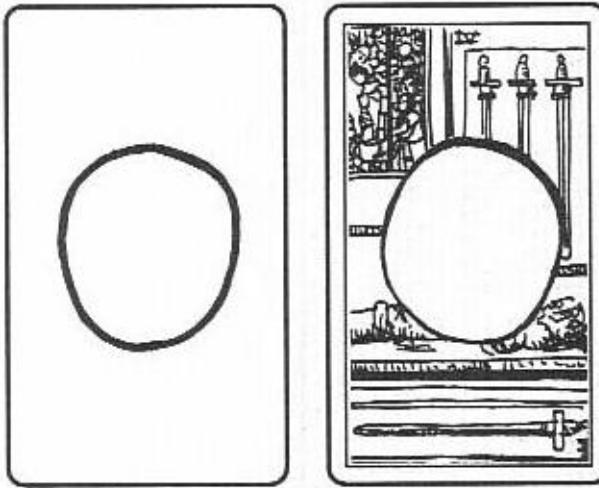
The question card now faces you, so you should be able to get a good glimpse before continuing the wrapping procedure and setting the deck aside.

²This is J.G. Thompson's *Impromptu Vision*, which will be found in ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 37.

ENCOUNTER

The querent is asked to cut the deck and the position is marked (i.e., you do the old cross-the-cut force). She is then handed a blank card with a circle drawn on it and asked to write the usual word or phrase within.

This done, you take four cards from the point cut to—in actuality the original top four cards of the deck; the third of these four has a window cut out of its center which matches the circle on the question card. You take these four cards from the deck by spreading them slightly, so that the window is not revealed.



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As you explain that these are the querent's Fate Cards, you idly count them; in doing this you execute an Elmsley count³. This exhibits the four cards as appearing completely ordinary.

³In print any number of places, including DAI VERNON'S MORE INNER SECRETS OF CARD MAGIC by Lewis Ganson, page 6.

T.A.R.O.T.

The top two cards are dealt in front of the querent, and the two cards remaining in the hand are spread slightly. The querent is asked to place the question card between these two cards "to isolate it" or "so it may absorb the Tarot vibrations", not "so I can't see what you've written" . . . !

At this point, optionally, you may snap a rubber band around the packet or secure it with paper clips; I personally feel such items are not in keeping with Tarot cards and do not use them.

The querent is asked to cut the deck again; as this is done you glimpse the message through the window. The packet is then placed into the deck and the querent replaces the cut-off portion.

Now, from the two Fate Cards dealt to the table, you proceed with the reading.

DemiJohnsson

You hand the Tarot deck to the querent and ask her to remove the blank card; this done, she is to write a word or phrase which symbolizes her question—or, if she wishes, the complete question; this method allows for it. As she is doing this, you remove from your desk drawer a three-by-five-inch envelope; this can be either a standard correspondence variety or a pay envelope, the only stipulation being that it is obviously opaque.

When she has completed writing the question, she places it face down on the desk. You hand her the envelope to initial; this is done, of course, to personalize it with her vibrations, rather than to prove that you don't switch it.

This done, you pick up the question card and—without even glancing in its direction—you place it in the initialed envelope as you instruct the querent to pick up the deck and mix it.

In actuality, you do nothing of the kind; the card that goes into the envelope is a blank one. The switch used to accomplish this is Rick Johnsson's IBGTH switch⁴.

What happens is this: as the querent is writing her question, you get a dummy, blank Tarot card from your lap and hold it in a Tenkai palm in your right hand. (Briefly: the card is held so that one long edge is against the palm and the other is at the outer joint of the thumb, the card well back in the hand; with the hand held thumb-side upward and the back of the hand toward the spectator, the card is horizontal and face down.)

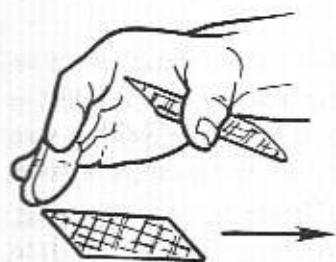
When the querent places the question card on the desk (which should have a smooth, cloth or felt covered surface), you move it over to the left, ostensibly just to get it out of the way for the moment. This is done with your left hand, which

⁴From his excellent book PRACTICAL IMPOSSIBILITIES, page 43.

T.A.R.O.T.

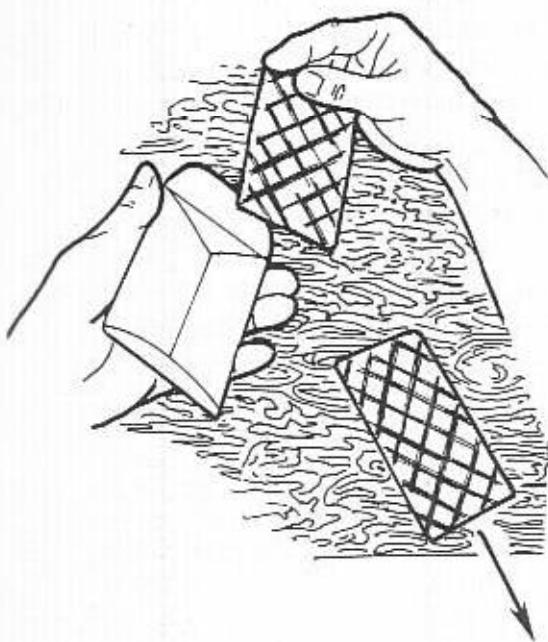
then picks up the envelope and hands it to the querent. At the same time the right arm moves down to rest on the desk.

After the querent has initialed the envelope, with your left hand put the deck in front of her and ask her to mix it. Take back the envelope with the same hand.



Your right hand now moves across the desk to the question card and stops there; your right forearm is resting on the desk. You apparently pick up the question card—but in actuality your right second finger propels it with a snapping motion so that it travels at an angle, hidden by your forearm, and drops into your lap. At the same time, the card in Tenkai palm is pivoted forward and into sight. From the querent's point of view it

appears *exactly* as though you have simply picked up the card; if you try this in front of a mirror you will see how visually deceptive this switch can be.



(Note: you should consult the Johnsson book cited for fine points of handling—and you should have the querent's chair a bit lower than might be usual. In addition to psychological advantages, this also insures that there is no possibility of the querent sighting the card as it moves along the desk behind your arm.

(In many situations this switch might be difficult to bring off because of angles—but here, working for one person only and having their position under complete control, it works perfectly. Its great advantage is that it does not look like any kind of move or sleight.)

All of this has taken a bit of space to describe, but happens in only a second or two; the blank card having been placed in the envelope, it is set aside and the deck is retrieved from the querent. The cards are dealt out for a reading, and at any time you wish you can glance down and read the card in your lap.

You may, of course, wish to burn the envelope in a brazier or some such; this can lend a dramatic and atmospheric touch. It can, in fact, sometimes get *too* atmospheric, so you should make sure that the room is properly ventilated before doing this.

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A variant I have used is to pull out the drawer of the desk slightly; instead of falling to my lap, the card drops into the drawer and onto a pad of paper resting there. If the question can't be easily read with a downward glimpse, the pad is taken out with the card behind it, and under the guise of making notes the question is read at leisure.

NOTES

In all of the above methods the question card is left in the deck, cloth or envelope. I do *not* retrieve it at the conclusion of the reading, since there is no need for it; indeed, it is best if the querent forgets that any writing was ever done. Any cleanup or resetting should be done after the querent leaves.

Depending on the size of your hand relative to the Tarot deck you are using, even in the performance situation just described you may find it difficult to conceal the Tarot card in Tenkai palm. However, this same procedure can be used with ordinary playing cards or a double-blank deck without difficulty, as a straight question-answering method.

TarotTwo

In my *Double Routine*, I suggested a Tarot presentation involving a marked deck and a pocket-writer (page 183); the routine can be greatly simplified by the use of a simple cut force.

Very briefly: the querent cuts the deck and you cross the cut in the usual fashion. She now writes a question on a slip of paper and folds it up, depositing it in a cup or small bowl you hold. As you set the bowl aside you scoop the billet up into your fingers.

Picking up a folded slip which bears the name of the forced Tarot card, you switch for the question slip, which you open up.

You pretend to write a prophecy concerning the Tarot card; actually, of course, you simply note the question and refold the slip, dropping both together into the cup.

The cards are now dealt into any divinatory pattern, the first (force) card going face down. You do the reading, divining the question, and finally reveal the Card of Fate. When the querent checks the slips she finds her question and your correct prediction.

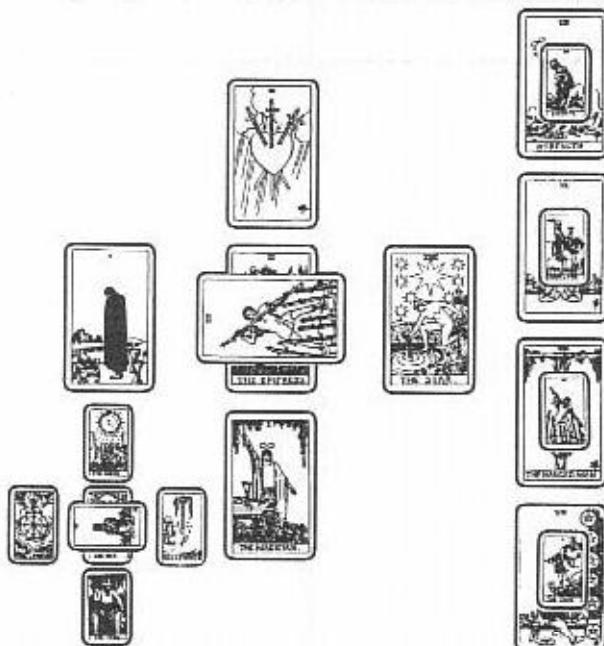
LAYOUT CONCEPTS

Most Tarot readers use the Celtic Cross layout pattern for reading, and it is perfectly serviceable. Here are, however, a pair of variations which you may find interesting.

DoubleCheck

The deck is laid out in the Celtic Cross pattern; then, however, you take out a miniature Tarot deck, and after this has been mixed by the spectator, you place the miniature cards down on the layout in the same pattern, over the larger cards (in the case of the central cross itself you make a smaller cross to one side). This second set of cards, as you explain to the querent, is used as a sort of 'fail-safe' system; they can either affirm, augment or cancel out the meaning on the larger card.

Since there are numerous interesting and appropriate experiments with the Tarot that require two decks, this is an interesting way of bringing a second deck into play.



DeaLull

This rather peculiar divination technique derives from the *Ars Magna* (Great Art) of Ramon Lull (1235-1315; he is sometimes known by his Latinized name of Raymond Lully).

Lull's system involved the inscribing of words around the borders of a number of parchment disks of varying sizes, which were then assembled in order of size with the largest disk at bottom and the smallest at top; all were then fastened together so that they could rotate freely and independently.

The divination technique consisted of moving the disks at random and then looking at the combinations of words thus produced.

Most, of course, would be meaningless—but a few combinations would show a definite relationship, and a relevance to the question in the mind of the querent.

My adaptation of this technique to the Tarot deck is as follows:

The deck is divided into three groups of cards—the Greater Arcana (titled cards 0 through 21), the Court Cards (Page, Knight, Queen and King) of the Lesser Arcana, and the Number Cards (1 through 10) of the Lesser Arcana.

The querent mixes each of these three groups separately. You then take the Court Cards and deal them out in a face-up four-by-four square. Sixteen of the Number Cards are dealt out, on top of the cards already there.

Finally, a like number of the Greater Arcana are dealt onto the pairs, giving you sixteen sets of three cards each.

As with Lull's technique, you now regard each set of three cards in turn. Some will show no pattern at all, while others will demonstrate an obvious relationship.

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From these meaningful triads, of course, you create your reading.

Obviously, an entire book could be written on this kind of divination technique; Lull devoted much of his life to it. I offer here only the basic adaptation and structure I have come up with, with the thought that among my readers are some who will find it useful and interesting.



EFFECTS

The items that follow are in many cases adaptations of effects from conventional card magic and mentalism. In some, use of the Tarot deck makes them more interesting; also, at times, it elaborates the effect, improves the method, or both.

PYRATAROT

This is an item for an audience of fair or large size rather than small group.

EFFECT

You state that before the show you asked a spectator to decide on one card from a deck of the Tarot; that spectator is asked to stand, confirm that she is still thinking of the card and has told no one.

A second spectator is invited on stage and asked to select a page in a book on the Tarot; for the moment this page is not revealed.

You explain that you gave a large envelope to a spectator before the show; that spectator is asked to stand.

Finally, a fourth spectator is asked to choose a card from Tarot deck which you show; he does so.

You state that the four spectators and yourself comprise the five points of a "pyramid of the mind"—and that, as i speculated about physical pyramids, mental pyramids can produce strange effects.

At this point the spectator thinking of a Tarot card is asked to reveal her thought; she does so.

The spectator who selected a Tarot card reveals it; it is the same card named by the first spectator.

The spectator with the envelope opens it; a matching jumbo Tarot card is revealed.

The spectator holding the book is asked to open it; his selected page contains a large illustration of the named card.

METHOD

As you have doubtless realized, this is a very direct adaptation of Phil Goldstein's *Four-Sided Triangle*⁵.

⁵See his RED BOOK OF MENTALISM, page 5.

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The spectator you approach before the show actually selects a card from your Tarot deck—this is perfectly logical, since most people do not know Tarot cards by name. You stress, however, that she is to *think* of the card and not reveal it to anyone. This card is, of course, forced. (See the Goldstein source mentioned for his excellent verbiage for this situation and the actual performance.)

Another spectator is given an envelope containing the jumbo Tarot card matching the force card.

In performance:

The spectator who thought of the card before the show is asked to stand as earlier described. A second spectator is invited up on stage. You show him a copy of Waite's PICTORIAL KEY TO THE TAROT (which has in some editions excellent full-page, full-color illustrations), and execute a force of the proper page. This can be done in any number of ways, but here the simpler the better; my personal preference is for a riffle-force using a few trimmed pages which act together as a short card. A bookmark is inserted to mark the spot, but the spectator does not look at the page as yet.

The spectator with the envelope is asked to stand; a fourth spectator selects a forced card from the deck.

It only remains to reveal the multiple coincidence—and take your bow.

CREDITS

As noted in text.

ASTRASPECULUM

EFFECT

A spectator is given the twenty-two cards of the Greater Arcana and asked to name a number between ten and twenty; the number is used to indicate a card from the group he holds.

You hand a second spectator a disk of glass and have her hold it in the palm of her hand; she is asked to concentrate on the disk, to attempt to see an image. Presently she says, a bit hesitantly, that she seems to see a faint image of a star.

The spectator is asked to turn over the previously selected card; it is, of course, *The Star*.

METHOD

As you have doubtless surmised, the disk is a commercially marketed item which produces a star image when a film of moisture condenses on it. This moisture was usually created by breathing on the disk; I believe it was Tony Andruzzi who first pointed out that the heat of the palm could also bring out the image.

The force of the Star card, however, has some interesting aspects. At the beginning of the routine it is the tenth card down from the top of the twenty-two-card group.

You ask the spectator his zodiac sign; this given, you mull the information over for a moment. *In that case,* you say, *"name a number between, ah, ten and twenty."* The impression given is that the range of numbers given is related to the person's birth-sign, and thus there is an occult reason for the limitation; in fact there is a reason, but not that one, and you *always* ask for a number between ten and twenty.

Your reason is that, asked to choose a number in this range, a large percentage of persons will choose seventeen. When this

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happens, you instruct the spectator to look through the cards and remove the one bearing the number seventeen—which is, of course, the Star card.

And what happens when they *don't* name seventeen? You point out that along with astrology and the Tarot, numerology is one of the most important divination systems—and you then proceed with the old numerology force.

To explain: you have the spectator deal off the named number in a face-down pile. You then, in approved numerological fashion, add the digits of the number together and have the spectator deal down to that card in the dealt pile. This will always be the card that was originally tenth down from the top of the deck.

The card is placed aside without being looked at, if you wish this to be a test of clairvoyance on the part of your scryer; if, on the other hand, the premise is telepathy, the spectator with the deck notes his selection.

It would also be possible to present it as precognition—your scryer noting her vision and drawing it on a slip of paper or simply keeping it in mind. In some situations, and with the right persons, this could be extremely effective; but in the majority of cases I would recommend the clairvoyant or telepathic presentations.

Possibly Irrelevant Note

If you allow drops of water to fall on the disk, they will assume the shape of a star (or whatever the disk has been prepared to produce).

CREDITS

The 'scrying' aspect is based on Tony Andruzzi's *Deryni Factor*, which appeared in DAEMON'S DIARY⁶.

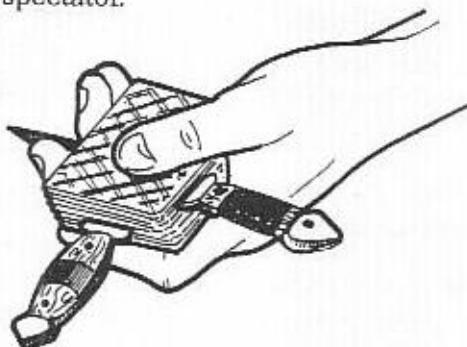
⁶Page 10.

STABLEAU

EFFECT

You shuffle a deck of Tarot cards and then place it before the spectator, who is invited to cut it several times; after he has done so, he deals the top card to you and takes the next for himself. Both cards are signed and returned to the deck, which is again cut several times by the spectator.

Introducing a pair of small thin-bladed daggers, you insert one of these from side to side through the deck; the spectator is handed the other knife and invited to insert it anywhere in the deck from front to back.



This having been done, you both name your cards; the deck is separated at the points where the daggers enter, and it is seen that your knife rests against the face of the spectator's signed card—and his knife rests against *your* signed card!

METHOD

A Tarot Svengali Deck is used. On the face of every short force card you have signed your name; there is no other preparation.

With care, a Tarot Svengali Deck can be riffle-shuffled. After the selection procedure as above, and the signing of the cards (which you of course simulate, since your force card is already signed), you replace your card first. No matter how often the spectator cuts the deck, you have only to look for the spot where two short cards are together, and insert your knife just above this short pair.

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(Note: while you and I know that straight cuts won't separate the two selections—unless they go to top and bottom of the deck—spectators usually *don't* know that. If you're worried about this, however, simply cut the deck so the two chosen cards are in the lower half. This done, you can now run any odd number of cards from the top [pulled off singly, in overhand shuffle fashion] and throw the rest of the deck on top of these cards. Alternatively you can do a Charlier false shuffle.)

You now riffle the deck from top to bottom and the spectator inserts his knife anywhere; it will, of course, be beneath one of your signed force cards.

You conclude as indicated in *Effect*.

NOTE

Do not omit the signature business; it is central to creating the believability of the effect. It is possible to do a crude version of this with glimpses and miscalls, but that rather misses the point of what happens. Here there are no moves, and the handling is clean and natural; keep it that way.

CREDITS

The idea of finding two cards with stabs into the deck in different locations was first suggested by Dr. Jacob Daley in his *Two Cards In Fear* which appeared in *The Jinx*⁷; both the general effect and method were different from *Stableau*.

⁷No. 85; April 1940; page 543.

STABOO

This bears a family resemblance to the preceding item, but is different both in effect and general method.

EFFECT

You show a Tarot deck and spread it across the table; turning your back, you instruct a spectator to remove a card from anywhere, note it and place it out of sight. She is then to square up the deck.

You turn around and give the deck a few idle cuts. At this point you may now proceed with a reading, in the course of which you delineate the ideal *Card of Fortune* for the spectator; it is, of course, the card previously noted.

METHOD

The deck has been stacked (see page 794) and alternate cards are cut short.

When you pick up the deck, you tap it on one end to move all the short cards down into alignment at the bottom. As with the preceding effect, you will note one place where there are two long or short cards together; this is the point from which the selected card has been removed.

You cut the deck at this point (between these two long or short cards), note the relevant card, and by your stacking system are able to deduce the identity of the chosen card.

NOTE

If you don't wish to prepare a deck specifically for this effect, you could use a Tarot Svengali, the indifferent cards being stacked. If, when you pick it up, you note two long cards together, one of the force cards has been selected; if two short (force) cards are together, you cut to bring them to the top and note the indifferent card at the face, concluding as before.

GYPSEE

This item is a combination of a presentational concept by Tony Corinda with a very old card effect.

EFFECT

From an envelope plastered with odd and colorful stamps you take a letter; it is written in pencil on a heavy parchment paper. You explain that the letter is from a Gypsy sorceress who has proposed a peculiar experiment which you would like to try. A spectator is invited up and you explain that you will read the instructions which they are to follow. A Tarot deck is placed in front of the spectator.

You read:

"The sitter is to cut off a portion of cards; more than a third of the Tarot must she cut. She is to remove the card from the lower portion and replace the cards cut off. She is then to note her card—which will be her Card of Fate—and place it on the deck of Tarot. Then she must cut the deck completely; this must be done thrice."

As you read the instructions, of course, the spectator follows them; thus her chosen card is now apparently lost in the deck.

"Now," you continue reading, "the deck must be turned so that the faces show, and again the sitter must cut the cards and complete the cut. This must be done until a Card of Fortune, a Card of the Greater Trumps, appears."

You pause to explain that this means one of the titled cards of the Greater Arcana.

"When this has been done, the card will be interpreted by my student _____ [your name]." You give a brief reading of the meaning of the card.

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'If all has been done, and the signs are favorable, the Card of Fate will now rest 7 cards down from the top of the deck of Tarot. Turn the deck down, and count, and see.'

The cards are turned face down and the specified number is dealt; there in fact is found the previously chosen card. The letter may, of course, be looked over by curious spectators.

METHOD

The Greater Arcana is stacked in numerical order at the bottom of the deck, with No. 1 being at the face of the deck; two more indifferent cards (i.e., cards from the Minor Arcana) are placed beneath it, so that it is now *third* from the bottom.

The letter is of heavy parchment and written in pencil to allow you to use a nail-writer to fill in the number.

In performance, you have the spectator follow the instructions as given in the letter. When the deck is turned face up and cut, you note the value of the card of the Greater Arcana which shows up (this may take a number of cuts, which is fine, making the procedure seem quite random). You add two to this number and fill in the blank space in the letter with the resulting number. That's all there is to it.

You will appreciate that you can do the filling-in of the number the moment the spectator cuts to the Greater Trump card, before you have even begun your reading of that card. You can then set the letter down while you give the reading, and if anyone should happen to glance at it—that's just fine.

NOTES

You add two cards to the stack at the bottom so that the number of the Trump card (to which, in any case, you do *not* call attention) will not be the same as the position in which the chosen card is found—a 'coincidence' which would be a direct tip-off to the method. In your reading you do not make any mention of the number of the Greater Arcana card.

One of the problems with this kind of method is the restrictions it imposes on the spectator. Here you don't have to worry about that, because you are *following* instructions rather than giving them.

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CREDITS

The presentational notion comes from Tony Corinda's *The Prophecy* in his THIRTEEN STEPS TO MENTALISM⁸. The stack which tips off the position of the card is a notion of Jack Miller's⁹, popularized at one time by Al Koran¹⁰.

⁸Page 119.

⁹See SCARNE ON CARD TRICKS, *The Traveling Card*, page 135; also Rufus Steele's 50 TRICKS, *That Number Down*, page 34.

¹⁰See *The Lazy Magician Does A Card Trick* in *Abra*, Vol. 18, No. 450; Sept. 11, 1954; page 115—and Lorayne's CLOSE-UP CARD MAGIC, page 199.

TRUMPERY

In this variation of the above, the cards of the Greater Arcana are marked on the backs, and you can therefore eliminate the business of having the deck turned face up. You simply have the spectator cut a number of times, and wait for one of the marked cards to show up on top.

A more elaborate variant would have the entire Tarot deck marked—and the prophecy would name not only the position of the card but its actual identity. Two drawbacks to this are the devising of a practical marking system for a full deck—though as I indicate on page 800, such is possible—and that in filling in the card with the nail-writer you would have to abbreviate, which would not be appropriate to the *mise en scène*.

TRUMPWAVE

EFFECT

You show a deck of Tarot cards in a leather case, and mention that one card within the deck is rather special; you propose an experiment to see if a spectator can sense the vibrations of this 'special' card.

The deck is placed to one side in a prominent position, and you show a deck of jumbo-size cards, consisting of the Greater Arcana of the Tarot. A spectator is invited up and eventually chooses one of these cards; he does not reveal his choice.

You take the regular Tarot deck from its display position and remove it from the case. Spreading the deck with faces outward, it is noted that one card is turned around with its back to the spectators.

You now *turn the deck around* to show the *backs* of all the other cards and the *face* of the reversed card. At your behest the spectator holding the jumbo card turns it to show its face to you and the audience; the two cards are, of course, identical.

METHOD

As to how you know the spectator's selection—the jumbo deck is stacked or marked (see *Notes*).

The Brainwave-type Tarot deck is based on an idea of Peter Warlock's (which used regular cards), and is possible because the Greater Arcana comprises slightly less than a third (twenty-two) of the seventy-eight-card deck.

To construct the deck, roughing fluid is applied to both faces and backs of all the Greater Arcana cards. The backs of twenty-two indifferent cards are also roughed, as are the faces of twenty-two more.

The deck is now assembled in three-card sets consisting of an indifferent card with a roughed face on top; a card of the Greater Arcana in the center, *face up*; and a card with a

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roughed back at the face of the packet. A set of three cards together can be handled as one card.

The packets are assembled in the numerical order of the Greater Arcana, with the No. 1 card nearest the face. When you have finished constructing the deck, you will have a dozen cards left over; six of these are placed on the bottom of the deck, six on top.

In performance:

Having learned the spectator's selection, you remove the Tarot deck from its case. Unlike a regular Brainwave deck, it can be handled with comparative freedom.

You hold the deck face up. As you begin to spread the cards the deck is edge-on to the audience; here you are only pushing off single cards (the first six), so you establish the singleness of the cards.

So that the spectators will be able to see the faces of the cards, you bring both hands up to one side and continue spreading; now, of course, you are pushing three-card packets.

As you do so you count them, and when you arrive at the proper packet you spread the three cards to show the reversed card, back outward.

It only remains to move your hands around in front of your body so the backs of the rest of the cards and the face of the reversed card will be seen, and then remove that card.

The spectator reveals his selection, and thus the effect concludes.

NOTES

Tarot cards are too detailed to be easily identified from audience distance. In this effect, however, as with *PyraTarot* (page 778), while the spectators cannot discern the actual identity they can easily see that the two cards are identical.

A jumbo Tarot deck is currently available from U.S. Games Systems; this has the standard back design of diagonal blue and black lines. It is not too difficult to develop a marking system using additional diagonal lines—very obvious to you but invisible to the spectator. A further discussion of marking will be found on page 800.

For close-quarter work, it is generally a bad idea to use a borderless deck for any sort of reversed-card effect—and the U.S. Games Systems Tarot decks are borderless. This routine, however, is specifically intended for stage use, and while the reversed cards within the three card packets may be visible to you, they will not be noticed from more than a few feet away.

CREDITS

As noted, Peter Warlock is the inventor of the particular system of rough-and-smooth cards here discussed.¹¹ The idea of using a Brainwave-type deck in conjunction with a marked deck is generally credited to Dr. Stanley Jaks.¹²

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¹¹See his PATTERNS FOR PSYCHICS, page 17; or *Pentagram*, Vol. 11, No. 10; July 1957; page 75.

¹²See OMAR'S PROPHECIES by J.G. Thompson.

SPIRITRUMP

EFFECT

You spread out a Tarot deck and have a spectator slide out a card. Without looking at it, you place it into a pay envelope which the spectator seals.

You pick up a pen and, turning over the envelope, attempt to get the identity of the card through automatic writing.

You appear to be in considerable difficulty; nothing happens for several minutes.

Then, obviously under a strain, you remark that you're beginning to get something...

...at that instant there is a blinding flash; at the same time your hand scrawls rapidly. With perhaps a bit of trouble you are able to make out your frenzied scrawl as *devil*.

When the envelope is opened, the *Devil* card is indeed found inside. It is burnt and scorched around the edges....

METHOD

The scorched *Devil* card is in a pay envelope, over which a flapless envelope has been placed; a few more envelopes are put underneath the loaded one.

In performance, the card selected by the spectator is placed in the top (flapless) envelope, and you then execute the flapless envelope switch¹³.

Now all you need is a bit of acting—and the FISM Flash device developed by John Cornelius; alternatively you can use Jay Scott Berry's ThumbFlash device.

¹³ANNEMANN'S PRACTICAL MENTAL EFFECTS, page 131; or page 596 of this volume.

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NOTE

As an alternative to writing the DEVIL name on the card, you might mumble that you're not getting letters, but numbers—and then scrawl the number:

7734

You show this to the spectator and ask if the number means anything to her. It doesn't, but later on someone will notice that upside-down the numbers spell out the word:

HELL

CREDITS

This was inspired by Bob Somerfeld's *That's The Spirit* which will be found in his excellent MINDREADER'S DIGEST¹⁴.

¹⁴Page 12.

SPOOKS

HAUNTKERCHIEF

HCI (page 584), you will recall, is a version of what is popularly known as the Haunted Deck; that version, which doesn't depend on threads, is still my favorite.

For those of you who *do* use the thread method, a simple thought:

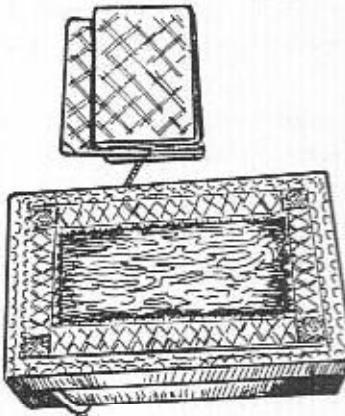
Have the other end of the thread attached to the cloth in which the deck is wrapped. When you unwrap the deck, you just crumple up the cloth and put it in your pocket (a rear trouser pocket is probably best for this); thus you now have a thread hookup to your body which is under your complete control.

PULLBOX

Another thought on the same problem.

Here, instead of taking the deck out of a cloth, you remove it from a wooden box.

In addition to the deck, the box has in it a music-box mechanism, with the metal 'harp' removed and the thread attached; it goes out through a small hole, around and back in to the deck. (This gives the steadiest pull, but you can just cut a small groove in the rear of the lid so the thread will pass freely when the lid is closed.) You adjust the mechanism so that, once you have pushed aside a retaining wire as you remove the deck, the rotating drum of the mechanism will take up the thread when the box is closed, and stop when it is opened, rather than the reverse.



TECHNICAL CONCERNs

STACKS

In *Pentally* (page 290) I gave cyclic stacks, based on adding five, for both the twenty-two cards of the Greater Arcana and the fourteen cards of each suit. Consult that article for relevant information.

I also noted in *Quintasense* (page 279) that I generally use a twenty-five-card group, consisting of the twenty-two cards of the Greater Arcana, to which are added the *King of Wands*, *Queen of Cups* and *Ace of Swords*. (This is an idea of John Snider's). I then divided the cards into groups with similar iconography, thus:

- No. 1: Sun, Moon, Star, Wheel of Fortune, Ace of Swords.
- No. 2: Lovers, World, Temperance, Chariot, Judgement.
- No. 3: High Priestess, Justice, Queen of Cups, Strength, Empress.
- No. 4: Hierophant, Hermit, King of Wands, Magician, Emperor.
- No. 5: Devil, Tower, Fool, Hanged Man, Death.

In *Alpharoah* (page 491) I outlined two methods of forcing a particular assortment of cards in a twenty-five-card packet of alphabet cards. The techniques may also be applied to the Tarot as follows:

Procedure A

The twenty-five-card Tarot pack is arranged with all the cards in each group together; the groups themselves may be in any order. You divide the deck into two portions (of thirteen and twelve cards) and do a straddle faro—so that the top card remains on top and the thirteenth card becomes the bottom card.

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This is repeated thrice—four times in all—and then the cards are dealt out into a five-by-five square. The spectator may choose the five cards of any horizontal, vertical or diagonal row, and will get only one card from each group. Since the cards in each group share characteristics, a prediction of the reading can be done.

(Note: It is probably advisable to do the first three straddle faros before the performance; you can take your time with them, leaving only the fourth faro to be done in performance.)

Procedure B

The cards are arranged in cyclic order, one from each group in turn—

1-2-3-4-5-1-2-3-4-5-1-2-3-4-5-etc.

Again the cards are given straddle faros; you continue this procedure until the spectator asks you to stop. When he does so, you place the deck in front of him, have him cut it anywhere and take the next five cards.

As before, the five will consist of one each from the five groups.



Using the twenty-five cards as indicated above, this left me with fifty-three cards remaining in the deck. By arbitrarily deciding that the Pages could substitute for the missing cards of the relevant suits—the *Page of Pentacles* subbing for the Joker, if necessary—I could then stack this deck in any conventional manner. As you no doubt know, Wands = Clubs, Hearts = Cups, Pentacles = Diamonds, and Swords = Spades.

Such a deck may thus be stacked in Stebbins, Nikola, Eight Kings—whatever you like.

You will also note that it can therefore be used in conjunction with any of the many versions of the 'diary' effect currently marketed or in print. If you use it for such a routine, you might consider using one of the astrological Daily Guides rather than a conventional diary.

Note also that you can then use standard billet indexes in conjunction with the Tarot, the Tarot card billets going into their playing card equivalent locations.



Many of you have doubtless used Stephen Minch's adaptation of a Martin Gardner principle first marketed by Gene Gordon as Hal Newton's *The Voice From Another World*. Minch's *Towering Prediction* published in his *BOOK OF THOTH*¹⁵, and in revised form in *The New Invocation*¹⁶, used a layout of Tarot cards upon which a talisman was moved.

¹⁵Page 31.

¹⁶No. 3; Feb. 1980; page 25.

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With such effects, the spectator is generally limited in where he or she may place the token to begin the routine; what follows is an automatic way to insure proper placement.

The cards of the Greater Arcana can be divided, obviously, into two groups: those which spell with an *even* number of letters, and those with an *odd* number of letters. They don't divide quite equally, so I have devised the following groupings:

If cards are spelled with the THE included:

EVEN: 2-3-4-7-8-10-12-14-15-16

ODD: 1-5-6-9-11-13-17-18-20-22

THE SUN (19) and THE WORLD (21) are eliminated.

If the cards are spelled without the THE:

EVEN: 1-5-6-8-9-10-14-17-18-22

ODD: 2-3-4-7-11-12-13-15-16-19

JUDGEMENT (20) and THE WORLD (21) are eliminated.

It is probably for the best to have the querent spell the complete name of the card, including the *the* when present; I offer the alternative groupings for those who for some reason prefer not to do this. Two cards must be removed from the groupings as indicated to maintain an equal number; the ones I suggest will do, but any other cards that maintain the odd-even parity will do as well.

If the odd cards are trimmed slightly short and alternated with the even cards, the spectator can cut any number of times and then deal out a three-by-three face-up layout on which he places his talisman or token *anywhere...*

...because your first instruction is for him to look at the card his token rests on, and to spell *the name of that card*, making one move for each letter.

If he starts on a card with an odd number of letters, it will move him to a card with an even number of letters; if he starts on a card with an *even* number of letters he will *still* end up on an even-letter card.

Thus without ever seeing the layout, you have controlled the spectator to one of the four positions necessary to begin the game proper. If, in addition to the odd-even alternation, you have memorized the stack (or put it down on a cue-list; after all, you *will* have your back turned), you can have the spectator deal out the cards face down, and only turn them face up after you have set the rest of the deck aside (noting the bottom card, of course) and turned away.

You will appreciate that if you have a three-way prediction envelope, covering (for example) the cards at Positions One, Nine and Seventeen in your stack, then no matter where the spectator cuts, one of these cards will have to be present in the layout, and you can easily eliminate down to this card without ever seeing it, by the way you call the moves.

T.A.R.O.T.

For further information on this kind of routine (in addition to the Minch references given above) you might take a look at John Snider's SECRETUM TAROTUS OF ARKANN manuscript.

CREDITS

The use of a spelling procedure to position the token correctly at the beginning is something I came up with independently; however, I had been anticipated by Bob Neale in his *Two Guns* effect which appeared in *Pallbearers Review*¹⁷. This proves, I suppose, that great minds think alike...

...and so do Neale's and mine.



The division into two groups noted above can, of course, also be used in any kind of divided-deck location, a card chosen from one group being replaced in the other.

If the cards are stacked in alternating fashion, you can have two cards selected and returned as in *Stableau* (page 782); after the spectators cut the deck several times, you deal it into two piles—and of course the selections will be the outsider cards in each group.

¹⁷Vol. 8, No. 8; June 1973; page 634—also, later, in his book TRICKS OF THE IMAGINATION, page 15.

ONE-WAY DECKS

Most Tarot decks have obvious one-way faces—i.e., faces with a specific right-side-up or upside-down orientation; some also have similarly blatant designs on the backs (e.g., the Crowley Deck's Rose Cross).

Clearly, a subtlety must be added to disguise the use of the one-way principle. What follows is a fairly simple one.

With all the cards facing one way, separate out the forty numbered suit cards and reverse *these only*.

The deck is then reassembled and shuffled; at a casual glance, it seems to have no particular orientation—but a card reversed from its 'proper' direction will be easily spotted.

Given the basic concept, you will appreciate that the two groupings can be any you desire and can remember, the only caveat being that they should be *approximately* equal. All of the cards of three suits might comprise one group; the remaining suit and the Greater Arcana the other.

A considerably more subtle and underhanded notion is to reverse a totally random half of the deck, and then mark the whole deck at one end on the face. In the case of Tarot cards I really don't think this is necessary, but mention it for completeness' sake. I originally used it with those Bridge decks with obvious pictorial backs. Since the backs were obviously mixed in orientation, spectators (and a number of magicians) eliminated the one-way principle as a possibility—and were left with no solution for the effect in hand.

If at the outset of the routine the two groups of cards are kept separate, we can apply a concept used by Dr. Jaks (with a pictorial deck in his *Legacy From Tibet*¹⁸).

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You proffer the deck to the spectator so that when he or she removes a card, it will be *upside-down* from the spectator's point of view—so the *spectator will turn it around* in order to read its identity, making it unnecessary for you to reverse the deck.

MARKED DECKS

Tarot decks are not the easiest to mark—in part because there are half again as many cards as in a regular deck. Also, few such decks lend themselves to marking systems; the backs used by U.S. Games Systems for the popular Rider-Waite deck (sometimes called a Steamboat back from a particular deck which used this back pattern) does not lend itself to extensive markings—and some others are even worse.

If the deck is divided into the fifty-three- and twenty-five-card groups indicated above, the problem is somewhat simplified, but still far from easy.

With the steamboat back, the most indetectable markings are extra lines added to the cross-hatch pattern. Carefully placed, these can be read from some distance.

Similarly, slight 'printing imperfections' can be added to existing lines; this must be subtly done to work effectively.

If you are familiar with Ted Lesley's *Working Performer's Marked Deck* you will understand how its principle can be adapted to Tarot. This is an excellent solution to the problem; its only drawback is finding the proper and practical marking materials required.

If you are familiar with the Nikola or any other memorized stack, you can apply an interesting notion of Ed Marlo's—which is to mark the cards not by suit and value but by their numerical position in the stack.¹⁹ The card is then simply 'translated' into its Tarot equivalent as indicated above.

T.A.R.O.T.

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AFTERWORD

AND YOU THOUGHT you were going to get out of here without a few final words from me... by now you should know better.

In this complete work there are about two hundred effects; on a theoretical basis, given that one might do half-a-dozen effects in any given show, you have enough here for more than thirty different shows. On a practical level it might work out to less than that, but the point I'd like to make is still valid.

And what is the point?

In the introductory comments to *MYSTYX* I noted that I take a hard line on doing original (or at least unknown) material, and that I won't do anything I have heard that another working professional performer is doing. Let me take that a bit further, to point out how seriously I feel about this.

More than once I have spent a few months (or more) working on a routine, only to see another mentalist doing a version of it; much as it pains me, I drop it right there. Conversely, if I am doing an original and unpublished routine of my own, I will go to considerable lengths to prevent a copyist from using it.

Some magicians I have talked to about this problem think I am being silly; they point out that within magic there are a fair number of 'standard tricks'.

Indeed there are—and I think that is perhaps the primary reason (aside from incompetent performance) that magic is by and large without any respect in the rest of show business. Think about it for a moment: with the exception of intentionally nostalgic performers like Harry Connick, Jr., what contemporary singer made his or her career with 'standard songs'? What dancer's career is based on 'standard dances'? What comedian does a routine of 'standard jokes'?

Certainly, there are some that do—and they stay at the very bottom level of their respective arts, down there with most of magic and nearly as much mentalism.

They aren't stars, however, and they sure as hell aren't artists—and they never will be.

MIND, MYTH & MAGICK

(I cannot resist at this point mentioning a review of a magic show in a major metropolitan daily that congratulated the performer on his "... *wonderful re-creation of a hokey old-time magic show.*" The reviewer didn't have the slightest notion that the performer was dead serious and thought he was being contemporary.)

I am told—often by people who should know better—that one can't be original because there are only a few different effects in mentalism: telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis.

Well—there are only a few different plots for stories, but that hasn't stopped us from enjoying various versions of them for the past few thousand years. A plot can be presented in many different ways, and so can a specific story—thus Shakespeare's *The Tempest* becomes the SF film *FORBIDDEN PLANET*.

To relate this expressly to mentalism—on a technical level, *KeyKnow*, *Chairvoyance*, *Pastell*, *Pholder* and *Decideal* in this book are all predictions—but to an audience they will play as very different effects because of the way in which the premise of prediction is approached in each case.

We listen to Michael Bolton or Suzanne Vega (or Diamanda Galas!) to hear an original and unique musical style; we watch Paula Abdul because we've never seen anyone move like that before; we laugh at Steven Wright's completely original approach to humor.

We watch someone up on stage calling off cards a spectator is holding—or describing stuff while blindfolded—and why, really, should we care? We've seen it before. And if we haven't, why should we want to see it now? (And, yes, there are some very talented performers who use those items—but that isn't the point!)

The answer I often get to this is that in mentalism the originality lies in the presentation, in the performer's skills as an entertainer. I certainly hope so; but why stop there? Why not extend that originality to what is performed?

Compared to the average singer/songwriter, we've got it easy; there are hundreds of effects in the literature that no one in our rather uncommon profession is performing—more material than all working professional mentalists could use up in a long time. There is, therefore, no reason whatever to do something you've seen someone else do—and every reason not to.

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By being original and interesting—and, I trust, entertaining—you are perceived as an artist, and what you do as an art; if we all do that, we can lift mentalism out of the gutter of preconceptions that most viewers bring to it, and make the idea of mentalism as entertainment an intriguing one rather than a turn-off.

In this collection I have tried to provide you with usable performance material; certainly I hope you like what you've read here, but do remember that it is just that—material—and is no more a show or act than a bolt of cloth material is a costume. You have to pick the colors—you have to do the fitting

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and cutting and sewing—you have to try it on and keep making the alterations until it is a perfect fit.

Then—unless you're a mindless robot, content to do the same thing forever—after wearing it for a time you have to finally hang it up and begin the process all over again.

It's not easy—and it isn't supposed to be.

Mentalism is primarily a theatre art, an acting art; and to a great degree the way you affect your audience is determined by the role you choose to play on stage. You are the special part of mentalism—and therefore it follows that the effects you choose, and adapt, and develop, must be consistent with that onstage you and help to express that character. The best-designed mental effects are simple; they do not have the complexity of an acting role such as Hamlet, and therefore if we are to develop believable characters onstage it must be through the combination of our selection of material with the personal sensibility we bring to it.

If we do that, each performance of mentalism—and each mentalist—will be a unique experience.

January 1993